TIBETAN SONGS OF REALIZATION

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TIBETAN SONGS OF REALIZATION

Echoes from a Seventeenth-Century Scholar and Siddha in Amdo

BY

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Cover illustration: A portrait of the 17th-century scholar and siddha, Skal ldan rgya mtsho, author of the songs.

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Noble Nāgārjuna and sons,
The unrivalled Blo bzang grags pa, [and]
Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan,
I beseech [you] from [my] heart.
Please guide [me] with the iron hook of compassion.

Although the eagle of my nonconceptual mind
Longs to fly to the *dharmadhātu*,
[It] has been helplessly bound to samsara
By the multicolored net of egocentricity.

Please quickly cut this egocentricity
With the sharp blade of the deep path.
Please guide [me] with the iron hook of compassion.[1]

[1] Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Shar skal ldan rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1994), 223. Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Yab rje bla ma skal ldan rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum*, in *Yab rje bla ma skal ldan rgya mtsho'i gsung 'bum*, by Skal ldan rgya mtsho (Xining: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999),

This song was written by the great siddha, the one who performs divine plays by means of a dance, the great sovereign who is a scholar who also achieved spiritual realization, Skal ldan rgya mtsho. His biographer, Byang chub mi la Ngag dbang bsod nams (1636–1716), tells us that he was born in 1607 in Reb gong to a man of Rong bo, in conformity with a prophesy by a clairvoyant siddha, which said, "to you three famous sons will be born."[2]

But while he did go on to achieve great fame around Reb gong, he is little known in the West. There is one reference to him by A. I. Vostrikov in *Tibetan Historical Literature*.[3] G. Smith published whatever writings of Skal ldan rgya mtsho he received from the hands of refugees coming to India—*Bla ma'i rnam thar gyi rim pa 'jam dpal bstan pa'i mdzes rgyan* (*A Collection of Biographies of Eminent Gelukpa Masters*), published in 1970,[4] and *Gsung mgur*

196. (I will henceforth refer to the author and texts in footnotes as Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, C and D, respectively.)

The abbreviations A, B, C, and D stand for respective extant editions of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum*, and are defined together in Appendix D. The notes for my critical edition of this passage are as follows: *rnyi* BD; *snyi* AC.

Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570-1662) was the first Paṇ chen Lama. He gave Skal ldan rgya mtsho full ordination. The deep significance that the Paṇ chen Lama had for Skal ldan rgya mtsho is emphasized by the many times Skal ldan rgya mtsho mentions him in his *mgur*.

I have followed M. Ricard's example in translating *rgod* as eagle rather than vulture, because of the negative connotation of the vulture in the West.

[2] One of the other two sons is Chos pa Rin po che (1581-1659). As a principle guide and teacher of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, he will figure strongly in this book. The other son is Lama Dmar po, who is never mentioned again in the biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. See Byang chub mi la Ngag dbang bsod nams, *Rje skal ldan rgya mtsho'i rnam thar yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal bo* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1990), 3. (I will henceforth refer to this author and text in footnotes as Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*.)

[3] A. I. Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature*, trans. Harish Chandra Gupta, Soviet Indology Series, no. 4 (Calcutta: Indian Studies: Past & Present, 1970), 171-72.

[4] Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Rong ston chos kyi rgyal po grub dbang skal ldan rgya mtsho'i gsung las, bla ma'i rnam thar gyi rim pa 'jam dpal bstan pa'i mdzes rgyan* (carved at Bde chen chos 'khor gling of Rong bo), in *The Secret Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho, being the text of Thams cad mkhyen pa ngag dbang chos grags dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa phul du byung ba'i mdzad pa bzang po'i gtam snyan lha'i tambu ra'i rgyud kyi sgra dbyangs*, by Dar rgyas No mon han Lhun grub dar rgyas, together with *A Collection of Biographies of Eminent Geluk pa Masters* by Rong po Grub chen Skal ldan rgya mtsho (New Delhi: 1970), folios 245-474. (Henceforth referred to as Skal ldan, *Bla ma'i rnam thar gyi rim pa*.)

(*Collected Songs of Spiritual Experience*) in 1977.[5] Skal ldan rgya mtsho's writings are further mentioned in D. Martin's catalogue.[6] The very popular 1994 publication of *The Life of Shabkar* by M. Ricard brought details of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's life to the attention of the West, since Zhabs dkar, though born more than a century after Skal ldan rgya mtsho's death, finds him an enormous source of inspiration. Zhabs dkar Tshogs drug rang grol (1781–1851) goes to places where Skal ldan rgya mtsho had meditated, receives an oral transmission of his *Gsung mgur*, sings his songs, and hopes to also stay someday in mountain retreats.[7] As far as I know, from among all of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's writings, only four of his poems had been translated and published in a Western language prior to my thesis.[8] These were two fragments by M. Ricard as part of *The Life of Shabkar*,[9] and two full songs by Thupten Jinpa and J. Elsner in their anthology *Songs of Spiritual Experience*, which also contains a short biography of him.[10]

In the summers of 1993, 1996, 2000, 2001 and 2002, I lived in places around Reb gong where Skal ldan rgya mtsho had lived, and had constant contact with people whose lives are imbued with Skal ldan rgya mtsho's teachings and life story. In 1996, I obtained a wood-block print of his entire *Gsung 'bum* (*Collected Writings*) which, I believe, was the first to reach the West.

Studying his biography, I learned that on the one hand, Skal ldan rgya mtsho had had an extensive, conservative Dge lugs pa education

[5] Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Gsung mgur*, carved at Thos bsam gling, Rong bo monastery, Reb gong, Amdo, in the *me pho byi* year 1756; copied and published under the title *Rnam 'dren bla ma skal ldan rgya mtsho'i gsung mgur. The Collected Songs of Spiritual Experience of Rong bo Grub chen Skal ldan rgya mtsho* (New Delhi: A lags 'Jam dbyangs, 1977).

[6] Dan Martin, in collab. with Yael Bentor, *Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works* (London: Serindia Publications, 1997), 111.

[7] Matthieu Ricard, ed., trans., *The Life of Shabkar: The Autobiography of a Tibetan Yogin* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 15, 21-22 n. 4, 29, 71, 137, 146, 493, 502, 528, 529. (Henceforth referred to as Ricard, trans., *The Life of Shabkar*.)

[8] Victoria Sujata, "A Commentary on the *Mgur 'bum* (*Collected Songs of Spiritual Realization*) of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, a Seventeenth Century Scholar and Siddha from Amdo" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2003).

[9] Ricard, trans., *The Life of Shabkar*, 29-30, 155.

[10] Thupten Jinpa & Jaś Elsner, comp., trans., *Songs of Spiritual Experience: Tibetan Buddhist Poems of Insight & Awakening* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), 64-65, 77, 224.

at Dga' ldan Monastery outside Lhasa, and had founded and run the first religious college of that sect in Reb gong and wrote numerous scholarly texts. On the other hand, and very surprisingly, he later spent years in beautiful solitary places tucked away in the mountains as a hermit whose mode of expression was songs of spiritual realization, known as *mgur*.

Various scholars have already noted that the genre of *mgur* stands out from most other forms of Tibetan literature for its startlingly and unusually sincere descriptions of inner thoughts, feelings and experiential knowledge.[11] I have found this to be true of the collection of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, which contains invaluable autobiographical material and information on his surroundings, and moreover is a treasure house of styles.

My objective is to use the *Mgur 'bum* to show Skal ldan rgya mtsho's importance both as a distinctive figure in religious history and as an author. My approaches here are dual. First, I will use what Skal ldan rgya mtsho tells us in his songs about his times and himself: his joy concerning the expansion of Buddhism into Amdo (in Eastern Tibet) and, though he was highly instrumental in Buddhism's rise there, his need to remove himself from all formal Buddhist institutions in order to pursue his personal quest for realization. Second, I will use examples from his songs to show Skal ldan rgya mtsho as a songwriter of myriad styles, and I will hypothesize that influences from his opposing ways of life are reflected at different times in the formal structures of his songs.

Here is how my two major themes are woven into the four parts of my book. Following this preface, in Part One I will draw upon the autobiographical and biographical material in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*. First I will show how he felt about selected topics such as his times in Amdo under Mongol dominance, how he viewed Central Tibet as the source of the teaching, and the spread of Buddhism from there to Amdo. Then I will present songs that show unique features of his religious quest. Autobiographical songs provide a wealth of detail about why he felt the need to leave privileged clerical positions to become a hermit, what he was looking for, and his struggle to

[11] See, for example, Roger R. Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet: *Glu*, *mGur*, *sNyan ngag* and 'Songs of Experience'," in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1996), 377-86. (This will henceforth be referred to as Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet.")

wean those who were dependent on him so that he could live the life he wanted in solitary places. Songs about Mi la ras pa (ca. 1040-1123) give an unusually ecumenical view of seventeenth century Dge lugs pa practitioners, in this case Skal ldan rgya mtsho and his older brother/teacher, who dared to emulate his way of life and to have a deep reincarnational connection with the great eleventh century siddha, at a time of great tension between the Dge lugs pa school and the Karma pa sect. Furthermore, songs about *Mahāmudrā* reveal some of the tantric practices Skal ldan rgya mtsho and his brother entertained as siddhas.

In Part Two I will give a brief explanation of the genre of *mgur*. Then I will address the reasons Skal ldan rgya mtsho gives for singing some of the songs, who they are for, the general topics he sings about, where he is singing and other pertinent information from the *mgur* and their colophons, in order to understand his relationship to the genre.

In Part Three I will give an overview of the styles of formal structures in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, including metrics, stanza patterns and poetic figures, illustrating points with examples from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum*. I will show that Skal ldan rgya mtsho's dichotomous lifestyle played a large role in bringing a wide range of influences to his writing. Both his monastic upbringing and his sympathies with folk music are reflected in the wide range of his choices regarding metrics, stanza patterns, and poetic figures. I have classified the latter according to whether they hark back to the *Kāvyādarśa*—the circa sixth-century text of Indian poetics by Daṇḍin that became a must for those writing formal verse in the monasteries of Tibet from perhaps the turn of the fourteenth century onwards—or are most probably indigenously Tibetan.

Finally, in a coda to this book, I will describe the very alive tradition in which the songs are sung today—where they are sung, by whom and under what circumstances. Though there is no certainty about the melodies that Skal ldan rgya mtsho himself sang, oral tradition claims that the present style dates back to his direct disciple, Shes rab bkra shis (1647-1716). I will analyze aspects of the melodic and rhythmic style briefly and hypothesize that it is heavily influenced by folk music from the eastern side of the Tibetan plateau, and I will supplement this book with an accompanying CD of my recordings of the songs.

While a translation of the entire *Mgur 'bum* is beyond the scope of this book, songs which stand out as models for some of my most important points appear in full translation in Appendix A. My synopsis of the life of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, emphasizing his monastic education and commitments to religious institutions that preceded his years as a hermit, is in Appendix B, and I provide an index to the songs on my CD in Appendix C. Appendix D gives information on the printing history and extant versions of the *Mgur 'bum*, and my critical edition. My catalogue of the *Collected Writings* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho is in Appendix E.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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rigorously stimulating conversations about some of the musical portions of this book. Harvard Professor K. K. Shelemay, ethno-musicologist, offered valuable suggestions on portions of the coda. I accept responsibility for any remaining mistakes in this book.

PART ONE

WHAT SKAL LDAN RGYA MTSHO'S *MGUR* TELL ABOUT HIS SPIRITUAL QUESTS

CHAPTER ONE

THE RISING SUN OF THE TEACHING IN AMDO

Skal ldan rgya mtsho lived at a time of great transition in Amdo, an area a good couple of months' journey northeast of Lhasa. How did he perceive his homeland in relation to Central Tibet? What solutions did he pursue for his own spiritual development and that of his region? And what major transformation took place in Amdo during his and his disciples' lifetimes? I will use quotations from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* as gateways into his views about Amdo and its problems, Central Tibet as the source of the teaching, and finally "the rising of the sun of the teaching" in Amdo.

The Ordos and Tümed Mongol tribes had entered the Amdo area in the late 1500s. Gushri Khan of the Qoshot tribe led an army to defeat the Čoγtu tribe there in 1637, and used Amdo as a base from which to lead a successful attack in Central Tibet on the enemies of the Dge lugs pa school, ultimately installing the fifth Dalai Lama on the throne of Tibet in 1642.[1] In this regard, it is clear that Gushri Khan and the Qoshot were directly supportive of the rise to power of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's sect, the Dge lugs pa school, in Central Tibet. But after the Qoshot's big victory, many of their leaders continued to live in their pasturelands in the Amdo area, where they and leaders of other Mongol tribes dominated the Tibetans. What was it like to live under their supremacy?

In Skal ldan rgya mtsho's view, the major problem in Amdo was the presence of the Mongols. Skal ldan rgya mtsho's biography is a source for how he interacted with the two Mongol rulers.[2] Yet there is a dearth of reference to any specific Mongol ruler by Skal ldan rgya mtsho himself in his *Mgur 'bum*. Though Skal ldan rgya mtsho felt obliged to honor and serve the Mongol governor of his region, the *Ju nang*, while in his presence, it is noteworthy that he never

[1] For more information on Qoshot Mongols and Gushri Khan, and on the role of the Qoshot and Gushri Khan in the enthroning of the fifth Dalai Lama, see my supplementary bibliography, "Sources for Historical Background."

[2] For a further discussion of the Tümed governer Qoloči, and the *Ju nang*, see Appendix B.

praises him or any other Mongol rulers in his songs (though praises to his lamas and others he admires are numerous), perhaps because he had no real praise for them. He also never criticizes any specific Mongol rulers in his *mgur*, in keeping with the Tibetan tradition of not voicing criticisms with names. The absence of any specific references to his Mongol rulers suggests part of the story. And we can gain more insight into how he felt about them directly from his *Mgur 'bum*, as he clearly feels the freedom to express in a general way his true feelings about Mongol rulers and their domination in his *mgur*. For example, from a song he sang to himself in the fall of 1662, Mgur XI-12,[3] we learn the following:

ཕན་བདེ་བའི་འབྱུང་གནས་སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན། །
ཧོར་སོག་པོས་འཛིན་པའི་དུས་སྐབས་འདིར། །
སྤྱིར་བོད་འབངས་མི་ལ་བདེ་སྐྱིད་དཀའ། །

སྒོས་བླ་མ་རྣམས་ལ་རང་དབང་མེད། །

གོས་མཛེས་མཛེས་གདན་ཆ་གང་ལེགས་དང་། །
ཧ་གང་ལེགས་བཟའ་བཏུང་གང་བཟང་བ། །
ཧོར་སོག་པོའི་དཔོན་པོའི་ལག་ན་ཡོད། །[4]

In this time in which the Buddha's teaching, the origin of benefit and happiness,
Is being seized by the Mongols,
Generally it is hard for the Tibetan people to be happy.

In particular, the lamas don't have independence.

[3] An explanation of my method of identifying *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* is in order. In the two extant woodblock editions, versions A and B, the songs appear without interruption. However, in the recently published bound texts, versions C and D, the *mgur* have been divided into chapters. Although the division of *mgur* into chapters is merely a later innovation, for simplicity's sake I have decided to identify a *mgur* by its chapter in versions C and D, with the belief that any reader of this book is far more likely to have this version than either of the woodblock prints. Hence, I will use "Mgur II-6," for example, to designate the sixth *mgur* in the second chapter of either of the two publications of bound texts.

[4] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 268-69/ 237.

The most beautiful clothes, the best cushions, and
The best horses, [and] the best food and drink
Are in the hands of the Mongols' masters.

The power of the Mongol lords is great, and causes more problems for the Tibetan practitioners than just being a drain on their resources, as Skal ldan rgya mtsho points out in Mgur XI-10:

ཧོར་སོག་པོའི་དཔོན་པོ་སྟོབས་ཆེ་བས། །
ངེད་སྒོམ་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་མགོ་བོ་འཁོར། །

རྒྱུ་ཟང་ཟིང་འར་འུར་མཐོང་ཙ་ན། །
སེམས་ཆོས་དང་འདྲིས་པ་དཀའ་མོར་འདུག །[5]

We meditators also waver
Because of the great power of the Hor Sog po rulers.

When [we] look at [their] material goods [and] sloppy way of
doing work,
It is difficult [for us] to integrate mind with religion.

And even if the Mongols were willing to share their wealth, he wouldn't want it, as he states sarcastically in Mgur XI-11:

ཧོར་སོག་པོའི་ཡུལ་དུ་ཤ་མོད་ཀྱང་། །
ཤ་ཕོ་བས་མི་འཛུ་ཟ་འདོད་མེད། །

རྟ་བཟང་པོ་སོག་ཡུལ་མང་ན་ཡང་། །
བཟང་དྲགས་[6] ན་རང་གིས་ཁ་མི་ཐུབ། །[7]

Although there is indeed meat in the area of Hor Sog po,
Because [my] stomach does not digest meat, [I] don't want to
eat it.

Although there are many good horses in Sog,
If [they] are extremely good, I myself can't rein [them] in.

---

5 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 265/ 234.
6 *drags* BCD; *drag* A.
7 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 266-67/ 235-36.

The wealth the Mongols have is also a hindrance to themselves, as Skal ldan rgya mtsho points out in Mgur XI-12, again with satire:

> དེ་ཐར་ལམ་སྒྲུབ་པའི་བར་ཆད་ཡིན། །
> གོས་གདན་ཆ་ལེགས་ཀྱང་ཐ་མར་འཛད། །
> རྟ་བཟང་ཡང་རྒས་ཤིང་འཆི་བར་འགྱུར། །
>
> ཟས་བཏུང་བ་ཞིམ་ཡང་[8] གཅིན་སྐྱག་གྱི། །
> མི་མང་པོའི་ནང་དུ་ཟག་པ་འཕེལ། །[9]

> [But having the best clothes, cushions, horses, food and drink]
> Is a hindrance to realizing the path to liberation.
> Although clothes and cushions are good, in the end [they]
> are spent.
> Although horses are good, [they] age[10] and die.
> Although food and drink is delicious, because of urine and
> excrement
> [Mental] defilements are increasing within many people.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho sees the Mongol people in general as persistent troublemakers, as he expresses in this excerpt from Mgur VII-15:

> མཚོ་ཁྲི་ཤོར་[11] རྒྱལ་མོའི་ཆབ་རྒྱ་ན། །
> ཧོར་སོག་པོའི་ཡུལ་སྡེ་མང་གནས་ཀྱང་། །
> དུས་རྟག་ཏུ་མི་དགེ་སྡིག་ལ་སྤྱོད། །
> དགེ་གང་ནུས་གྱིས་དང་བོད་སྡེ་རྣམས། །[12]

> Although near the waters of Lake Khri shor rgyal mo[13]
> There are many communities of Mongols living,
> [They] are always committing sins.
>
> Make virtue as much as possible, Tibetan communities!

---

[8] *yang* D; *kyang* ABC.
[9] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 268-69/ 237.
[10] I have interpreted the present tense, *rga,* here.
[11] *shor*, against all readings of ABCD, which are *gshog* AB; *shog* CD. This renders the spelling of the lake "*khri shor rgyal mo*," a decision made in consultation with the Rong bo scholar, Blo bzang chos grags. This spelling is consistent with that of Ngag dbang*, Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 35.
[12] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 157-58/ 140.
[13] This is Lake Kokonor.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho experiences lots of problems because of the Mongol dominance in Amdo. His hopes lie in the Tibetans being virtuous. But are they? How does he view the Tibetans in his hometown of Reb gong? Formerly, it was a very holy place, as he sings in Mgur XI-1:

སྔོན་ཨ་མདོའི་བསྟན་པ་སྔ་དར་དུས། །
ཡུལ་རེབ་གོང་གི་གྲུབ་ཐོབ་གནས་བརྒྱད་ཅེས། །
མཚན་སྙན་པ་ཉི་ཟླ་ལྟ་བུར་གྲགས། །[14]

Previously in the time of Amdo's Early Diffusion of Buddhism,
The name "The Eight Places of the Siddhas of Reb gong"
Was as famous as the sun and moon.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho felt strongly about Reb gong's past, and spent time practicing the teachings and singing *mgur* in these eight holy places.[15] But now Reb gong is a place with plenty of problems as well, as he attests in Mgur VI-1:

རེབ་གོང་ཕྱོགས་ལ་སྡུག་བསྔལ་མུན་པ་འཐིབས། །

....

རྨ་ཀླུང་ཕྱོགས་དང་རེབ་གོང་ཡུལ་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི། །
དམག་ཇག་འཐབ་རྩོད་ལ་སོགས་མཐོང་བའི་ཚེ། །
ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་འདི་ཚོའི་ད་ལྟའི་བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཀྱང་། །
རྐྱེན་ངན་དབང་གིས་ནམ་འགྱིབ་མི་ཤེས་སྙམ། །

གཙོ་བོ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་དམག་ལ་དགའ་བ་དང་། །
འབངས་རྣམས་ཆོས་མིན་ལས་ཀྱི་རྗེས་སུ་[16]འཇུག །[17]

In the area of Reb gong, the darkness of suffering is condensing.

....

[14] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 250-51/ 221.
[15] This was after he returned from Dbus at the age of twenty-one. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 70.
[16] *kyi rjes su* CD; *la de rjes* AB.
[17] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 122-23/ 109.

When [I] saw the fighting, robbery, brawls and so on
Of the area of Rma klung and the district of Reb gong,
[I] thought, 'Also the present day's happiness of those places
Is because of evil causes, [and I] don't know when [they]
will decrease.'

The masters also rejoice in the fighting, and
The subjects pursue unvirtuous activities.

And in Mgur VII-7, translated in full in the appendix, he acknowledges that his own behavior in Reb gong is also very poor. Skal ldan rgya mtsho is himself "the robber" here, and the village rites he performs in the marketplace for money are "shameless deeds."

རེབ་གོང་སྟོད་ཀྱི་ཇག་པ། །
འདི་ཕྱི་བློ་ཡིས་དོར་ཏེ། །
ཁྲེལ་མེད་བྱ་བ་རྐྱང་གིས། །
རང་གི་ལྟོ་གོས་སྒྲུབ་པོ། །[18]

As for the robber in upper Reb gong
Having rejected this and later [lives],
Through simply shameless deeds
You earn your own food and clothes.

All of this confusion around his homeland makes a sharp contrast with how he usually views Dbus. The following is an excerpt from Mgur XIII-5:

ས་ཡ་མདོའི་ཕྱོགས་ན་སྐྱ་སེར་ཀུན། །
ནོར་ཟང་ཟིང་འཚོལ་བས་མགོ་བོ་འཁོར། །

ཆོས་སྒྲུབ་མཁན་མང་ཡང་ཡུན་བསྲིངས་ནས། །
ཉམས་རྟོགས་པའི་འབྲས་བུ་སྨིན་པ་ཉུང་། །

[18] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 144/ 128.

སྟོད་ཉི་མ་དབུས་གཙང་ས་ཕྱོགས་སུ། །
ཆོས་སྒྲུབ་དང་བསྒྲུབས་འབྲས་སྨིན་པ་དང་། །
ཡུན་ཚེ་དང་སྡོམས་པའི་དམ་པས་གང་། །

ཡུལ་དེར་གནས་དམ་པ་དེ་རྣམས་ལ། །
མིག་ཡར་བལྟས་ཆོས་བྱས་ལམ་དུ་འགྲོ། །

སྔོན་སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་སེམས་དཔག་མེད་ཀྱིས། །
དུས་རྒྱུན་ཆགས་བྱིན་བརླབས་དབུས་གཙང་གི །
ས་དེ་ན་བདུད་ཀྱི་བར་ཆད་ཉུང་། །
སེམས་ཆོས་མཐུན་ཉམས་རྟོགས་སྐྱེ་བར་སླ། །
དུས་ད་ལྟ་མཁས་གྲུབ་དཔག་ཡས་བཞུགས། །
སྐྱེར་སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པའི་ཉི་མ་ཤར། །[19]

In the area of Amdo, because all the monks and lay people
Seek wealth and goods, [they] waver.
Although there are lots of people who practice religion for an extended period,
The ripenings of the fruits of experiential knowledge have been scarce.

The sun [= the teaching] in the area of upper Dbus Gtsang is resplendent
With the ripening of fruits through practicing and having practiced religion, and
With the strictness of life and thought.

The inhabitants of Dbus Gtsang looked up to those holy ones who dwelt in that region
[And they] practiced the teachings.
Previously, limitless Buddhas and bodhisattvas
Continually loved [and] blessed [Dbus Gtsang].

In Dbus Gtsang, the hindrances of the Evil One are few.
[When] mind and religion are in agreement, the birth of experiential knowledge is easy.

[19] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 337-38/ 299.

At this time, limitless scholars and practitioners dwell [there].
In general, the sun of the teaching of the Buddha shines.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's description of his brother taking him to Dbus and then Dga' ldan, and then his return to Reb gong ten years later, gives an impression of the wonder he felt for that area and how much he missed it after going home. The following is an excerpt from Mgur II-3:

རྗེ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་རྒྱན་བཀའ་དྲིན་ལས། །
ལོ་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ནས་རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་། །
ས་ཁྱད་འཕགས་དབུས་ཀྱི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་སོང་། །

གནས་ཁྱད་འཕགས་འབྲོག་རི་དགེ་ལྡན་དུ། །
སྐྱབས་ཁྱད་འཕགས་བློ་གྲོས་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་དྲུང་། །
ཁྲིམས་ཁྱད་འཕགས་རབ་བྱུང་[20] སྡོམ་པ་བླངས། །

....

[20] In Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 6-7, his biographer relates that Skal ldan rgya mtsho received vows and his name from Blo gros rgya mtsho, who prophesized that Skal ldan rgya mtsho would later have many disciples:

> རྒྱལ་བ་གཉིས་པ་རྗེ་བཙུན་བློ་བཟང་གྲགས་པའི་དཔལ་གྱི་མི་འཇིགས་སེངྒེའི་ཁྲི་ལ་དབང་བསྐུར་བ་རྔོག་ལོ་ཆེན་པོ་བློ་ལྡན་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་སྤྲུལ་བའི་སྐུ་རྗེ་སྟག་ལུང་བྲག་པ་བློ་གྲོས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དང་མཇལ། དེར་ཁོང་གི་སྐུ་ཕྱོགས་སུ་དགེ་ཚུལ་བསྒྲུབས་ནས་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཞེས་མཚན་གསོལ་ཏེ། ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས་ཆོས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་དབོན་ཚུང་འདི་ལ་ངས་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཞེས་མིང་བཏགས་ཡོད་པས་ཕྱིས་སུ་འདི་ལ་སྐལ་ལྡན་གྱི་སློབ་མ་མང་པོ་ཡོང་གསུངས་པས། ཆོས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེས་ལགས། དེ་འདྲ་བྱུང་ན་ངའི་སྐྱིད་ཨང་ཞུས།
>
> [Skal ldan rgya mtsho] met lord Stag lung brag pa Blo gros rgya mtsho (1546–1618), the incarnation of the empowering one, Rngog Lo chen po Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109). [Blo gros rgya mtsho] had been placed on the glorious, fearless lion throne of lord Blo bzang grags pa'i dpal, the second Buddha. There, in his place, [he] was ordained and was given the name Skal ldan rgya mtsho. [Blo gros rgya mtsho] said to Chos pa Rin po che, "Since I have given the name Skal ldan rgya mtsho to this half-brother of yours, later many fortunate disciples will come to him." Because [he said that], Chos pa Rin po che replied, "Yes, to be sure! If it occurs like that, my happiness will be boundless."

སླར་རང་ཡུལ་སླེབས་ཚེ་ཉིན་བཞིན་དུ། །
ས་དབུས་གཙང་གི་གནས་ཚུལ་དྲན་ན་ཡང་། །
ཐག་མཆོག་ཏུ་རིང་བས་བགྲོད་མ་ནུས། །[21]

Because of the kindness of lord Blo bzang bstan rgyan,
At a young age [I] was ordained.
[We] went to the region of Dbus, the noble, special place.

At ’Brog ri Dga’ ldan, the noble, special abode,
In front of Blo gros rgya mtsho, the noble, special place of refuge,
[I] took the vow of ordination, the noble, special law.

....

When [I] arrived again at my homeland,
Although the situation of Dbus Gtsang went around and around in [my] mind everyday,
Because [it] was very distant, [I] was not able to walk [back].

Skal ldan rgya mtsho had spent ten years studying in Dbus. In Mgur III-12, he praises Dbus and Gsang phu monastery highly:

ཡ་གི་ཞིག་དབུས་གཙང་རུ་བཞི་ན། །
ལེགས་བཤད་ཀྱི་ནོར་བུ་གང་འདོད་ཡོད། །

ཐག་རིང་གི་ལམ་ཡངས་གྲུར་ཞུགས་ནས། །
སྐྱུར་བ་རུ་ལག་ཏུ་ལེན་པར་ཞུ། །

ཁྱད་པར་དུ་གསང་ཕུའི་ཆོས་གྲྭ་ན། །
མཁས་མང་[22]གི་མི་ཏོག་གང་འདོད་ཡོད། །[23]

In the four horns of upper[24] Dbus Gtsang,
Whatever treasures of good discourses desired are there.

21 Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 23, 24/ 20, 21.
22 *mang*, against all readings in ABCD: *ming*.
23 Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 51/ 45-46.
24 Upper here is meant in contrast to lower Tibetan regions, Amdo and Khams. The so-called four horns are geographic areas. See G. Uray, “The Four Horns of Tibet According to the Royal Annals,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 10 (1960): 31-57.

Having entered the boat of the wide long road,[25]
[You] will quickly receive [them] in [your] hand.

Especially in the religious school of Gsang phu,
The flowers of many scholars, whatever [one] desires, are there.

Yet seen from another side, even the situation in Dbus was not at all perfect and this feeds into his decision to stay home in Amdo. Mgur XI-24 points out big problems in three places—Dbus Gtsang and Mnga' ris, as well as Smad mdo khams (Amdo and Khams):

དུས་དེང་སང་དབུས་གཙང་རུ་བཞི་ན། །
ཆོས་སྒོམ་མཁན་མི་འདམ་[26] བཤད་མཁན་འདམ་[27]། །

ཁོང་ཆོས་པ་མི་བསྐོད་ཟོག་པོ་བསྐོད། །
ས་དེ་ཡང་གནས་རྒྱལ་དེ་ལྷར་གདའ། །

སྟོད་མངའ་རིས་[28] སྐོར་གསུམ་བྱ་བ་ན། །
ཆོས་སྒོམ་ཁྲིམས་གཙང་བའི་རབ་བྱུང་ལས། །
ཆང་བུད་མེད་སྐྱོད་པའི་ཟོག་པོ་འདམ[29]། །

ས་དེ་ཡི་ཆོས་ཀྱང་ཧ་གོ་འདུག །

སྨད་མདོ་ཁམས་སྒང་གསུམ་བྱ་བ་ན། །
ཆོས་ཐོས་བསམ་སྒོམ་[30] གསུམ་བྱེད་མཁན་ལས། །
ཁྲོམ་[31] གྲོང་ཆོག་བྱེད་པའི་རབ་བྱུང་འདེམ། །

ས་དེ་ཡང་གནས་རྒྱལ་མཐོང་ན་ཞེས། །

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25 The road from Amdo to Dbus.
26 *'dam* AB; *'dem* CD.
27 *'dam* AB; *'dem* CD.
28 *ris* CD; *ri* AB.
29 *'dam* AB; *'dem* CD.
30 *sgom,* against all readings of ABCD: *sgo.*
31 *khrom* CD; *khram* AB.

ཡར་དམ་པའི་ལྷ་ཆོས་བཟང་ངན་དེ། །
ས་བཟང་ངན་སློ་ནས་མི་འཇོག་གི །
སེམས་དུལ་དང་མ་དུལ་སློ་ནས་འཇོག །[32]

These days in the four horns of Dbus Gtsang
[They] don't choose meditators, [they] choose expounders
[of religion].[33]

They don't praise religious practitioners. [They] praise
deceitful people.
That place also has a situation like that.

In so-called upper Mnga' ris skor gsum,
Having taken pure vows of religion
[They] chose the deceit of conduct involving beer and women.

Also [they] understand the local religion.

In so-called lower three ridges of Mdo khams,[34]
Rather than choosing to listen to the teachings, think about them
and meditate,
[Their] "renunciant vows" mean doing village rites[35] [in]
the marketplace.

If [you] look at the situation of that place too, [you] will
know [this].

Whether [one's practice of] the superior, holy divine religion
is good [or] bad
Is not regulated by [whether one lives in] a good or bad place.
It is set according to [one's own] disciplined or undisciplined mind.

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32 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum,* 288-89/ 255-56.

33 The Dge lugs pas by now are largely focused on academic scholarship and disputation. Very few are primarily meditators. This is what Skal ldan rgya mtsho is criticizing here.

34 The geographical designation Mdo khams sgang gsum refers to Mdo khams (previously called Smad khams), Mdo smad (previously called G.yer mo thang), and Tsong kha (Gyi thang). This is a general term for the area of the upper reaches of the Yangtse and Yellow Rivers.

35 *Grong chog* are rituals monks perform away from the monastery, for which they receive food, offerings or fees.

Dbus can be idolized, but it has problems too, as the preceding excerpt expresses. All areas–Dbus Gtsang, Mnga' ris, Amdo and Khams–have problems. In Skal ldan rgya mtsho's eyes, Dbus is the source of the spread of Buddhism in Amdo, but it is far away and is not a perfect place either. In the end, Skal ldan rgya mtsho concludes, it is not where one lives but one's inner process that makes the difference. He also expresses this in Mgur V-9:

> ལས་དགེ་སྡིག་ལ་སླང་དོར་མི་བྱེད་ན། །
> ས་དབུས་གཙང་དུ་ཕྱིན་ཀྱང་དམ་ཆོས་དཀའ། །
>
> ཆོས་ཞེ་[36] རྒྱུད་དང་ལེགས་པར་འདྲེས་ཙ་ན། །
> ས་ཁམས་སུ་བསྡད་ཀྱང་ཆོས་མི་དཀའ། །[37]

> If [you] don't abandon virtuous and sinful karma,
> Even if [you] have gone to Dbus Gtsang, the holy religion is difficult.
>
> When [you] have integrated [your] mental disposition with religion,
> Even if [you] stayed in Khams,[38] religion would not be difficult.

Not only does Skal ldan rgya mtsho decide that he does not have to go to Central Tibet in order to progress spiritually, but it turns out that the teaching and his teachers come to him. Some of them pass through, and others come to stay for long periods.[39] One of the most

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[36] *zhe* ABC; *zhi* D.

[37] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 101/ 91.

[38] Skal ldan rgya mtsho may have considered Khams even more remote from Dbus than Amdo.

[39] The following discussion is not meant to focus on the historical detail. Facts about the spread of Buddhism in Amdo in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* are scant, because of the very nature of *mgur*, but accounts of his feelings and impressions about Buddhism spreading in Amdo are rich, and it is those that I want to focus on here.

References to historical events can be found best in two short histories Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote on the spread of Buddhism in Amdo. At least three versions of his histories are still extant:

1) Skal ldan rgya mtsho, No title (the subject matter is identified as *a mdo'i phyogs su bstan pa dar tshul gyi lo rgyus mdor bsdus* in the colophon), in *Rong ston chos kyi rgyal po grub dbang skal ldan rgya mtsho'i gsung las bla ma'i rnam thar gyi rim pa 'jam dpal bstan pa'i mdzes rgyan*, by Skal ldan rgya mtsho (carved at Bde chen chos 'khor gling of Rong bo: undated). Reproduced and published in *The Secret Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho*, *being the text of*

notable of those who settled in Amdo was Sde pa Chos rje Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho (1593–1638). He arrived in Amdo in 1618,[40] and remained there until his death.[41] Skal ldan rgya mtsho received many teachings from him, and wrote his biography.[42] In Mgur V-20, written sometime after Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho’s death, Skal ldan rgya mtsho acknowledges the former’s role in the spread of Buddhism in Amdo[43] and expresses his grief that his much cherished teacher has abandoned the world. This entire *mgur* is translated in my appendix, and the Tibetan text can be found there.

> When the lama Bstan ’dzin blo bzang was living—Oh joy!
> When [I] requested whatever empowerments, textual transmissions and ritual deeds [I wanted]—Oh, happiness!

Thams cad mkhyen pa ngag dbang chos grags dpal bzang po’i rnam par thar pa phul du byung ba’i mdzad pa bzang po’i gtam snyan lha’i tambu ra’i rgyud kyi sgra dbyangs, by Dar rgyas No mon han Lhun grub dar rgyas, together with *A Collection of Biographies of Eminent Gelukpa Masters* by Rong po Grub chen Skal ldan rgya mtsho (New Delhi: 1970), folios 455-474.

2) Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Rnal ’byor gyi dbang phyug blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam par thar pa dad pa’i ’dren byed*, in *Gsung ’bum*, by Skal ldan rgya mtsho (Reb gong: carved 1987), Ka-13. This will henceforth be referred to as Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987).

3) Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Rje skal ldan rgya mtsho’i gsung las mdo smad a mdo’i phyogs su bstan pa dar tshul gyi lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1999), vol. 1, 341-55.

Further historical detail about the spread of Buddhism in Amdo can be found in the following sources: various biographies Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote, in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum*, Ka; Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*; and Brag dgon Zhabs drung Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (b. 1801), *Mdo smad chos ’byung*.

[40] Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Rje skal ldan rgya mtsho’i gsung las mdo smad a mdo’i phyogs su bstan pa dar tshul gyi lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987), Ka-13, folio 3a.3. This date also agrees with the one given in the *TTC*.

[41] Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho dpal bzang bo’i zhal snga nas kyi rnam par thar pa dad pa’i sgo ’byed*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987), Ka-6; and in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1999), vol. 1, 180, 248.

[42] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 14, 18, 24, 91, 120. The biography of Sde pa Chos rje Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho can be found in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987), Ka-6.

[43] For a much more thorough explanation of the roles Sde pa Chos rje Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho played in the spread of Buddhism in Amdo, see his biography in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987), Ka-6; and Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Rje skal ldan rgya mtsho’i gsung las mdo smad a mdo’i phyogs su bstan pa dar tshul gyi lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987), Ka-13, folio 3a.3.

When [I] saw that smile, like the light of the moon, [on your] face—Oh delight!
When [I] experienced that flow of speech greater than nectar—Oh, what peace!

Although the rising sun of the Mighty One's teachings of explanation and practice
In this barbarous area, Amdo,
Is the kindness of only you, protector,
What enters the heart of those who do not recall [your] kindness?

In this time, lama, of your having renounced this place and
Having gone to a pure, stainless [Buddha] field,
Although [I] have searched again and again for a lama [I can] focus on with the net of a single-pointed mind,
[I] have not found [another].

....

In this time in which a spiritual friend who has even a mere portion [of what you have]
Is still more precious than the sun and the stars,
Although [I] live for the remainder of [my] life, what will [I] do?[44]

While Bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho was alive, Amdo was a spiritually fertile place for Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

One of the most notable of teachers who came through Amdo was none other than Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, the fifth Dalai Lama, who passed through on his way to China in 1652. The biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho says this about the Dalai Lama's visit:

དེ་ནས་རྗེ་འདི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་དགུང་ལོ་ཞེ་དྲུག་བཞེས་པ། དགའ་བ་ཞེས་ཆུ་ཕོ་འབྲུག་གི་ལོ་
ལ་བོད་གངས་ཅན་གྱི་མགོན་པོ་པད་དཀར་འཛིན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་ངག་དབང་
བློ་བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོ། རྒྱ་ནག་རྒྱལ་པོས་སྤྱན་དྲངས་ཏེ་མཚོ་ཁྲི་ཤོར་རྒྱལ་
མོ་དང་ཁད་ཉེ་བའི་བོ་རོ་ཆུ་འགག་ཅེས་བྱ་བའི་ས་ཆ་ཡངས་པར་ཕེབས་ནས་རྒྱུན་
རིང་ཙམ་བཞུགས། དེ་ཕྱོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་ནས་སྐལ་ལྡན་གྱི་གདུལ་བྱ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་
པ་འདུས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཟང་ཟིང་གི་འབུལ་བ་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོས་མཆོད་ཅིང་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་

[44] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 117-18/ 105.

ཞལ་བསྟན་ནས་དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་ཚིམ་པར་མཛད་པས། དེ་ནས་རྗེ་འདི་པ་ཡབ་སྲས་ཡང་རེབ་གོང་གི་སྐྱ་སེར་མང་པོ་དང་བཅས་ཏེ་དེར་བྱོན་ནས་ཟང་ཟིང་གི་འབུལ་བ་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོས་མཆོད་ཅིང་སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་རྗེས་གནང་སོགས་བཀའ་ཆོས་མང་དུ་ཞུས།[45]

....

རྒྱལ་དབང་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་ངག་དབང་བློ་བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་ཞབས་དྲུང་ནས། ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་སོགས་ཡི་དམ་གྱི་ལྷ་འགའ་ཞིག་གི་རྗེས་གནང་དང་། ལུང་གི་སྐོར་འགའ་ཞིག་གསན།[46]

Then in the year 1652, called *dga' ba*, [when] this very lord reached the age of forty-six, the master Pad dkar 'dzin pa thams cad mkhyen pa Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho dpal bzang po was invited by the emperor of China, and traveled widely to places called Mtsho khri shor rgyal mo and Khad nye ba'i bo ro chu 'gag, and stayed a long time. By means of vast offerings of financial support by the assemblages of limitlessly fortunate disciples from all these areas, [he] gave teachings regarding offerings and everything, and [the disciples] were made content with the holy religion. So then this lord the lama and his disciple also went there together with many lay people [and] monks of Reb gong, and by means of vast offerings of financial support, requested many teachings that have to do with expounding religion, such as the offerings, and tantric rituals of Spyan ras gzigs, and so on.

....

In the presence of Rgyal dbang thams cad mkhyen pa Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho dpal bzang po, [Skal ldan rgya mtsho] heard tantric rituals of several tutelary gods such as Thugs rje chen po and several cycles of textual transmissions.

In Skal ldan rgya mtsho's short biography of the fifth Dalai Lama, Mgur XII-12, we can read a personal account of how he perceived

[45] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 35-36.
[46] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 16-17.

the Dalai Lama's visit. The following passage describes what he saw the local deities doing when the Dalai Lama passed through:

ཡུལ་རྒྱ་ནག་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ཕེབས་ལམ་དུ། །
དཔལ་ཆོས་སྐྱོང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཞལ་གཟིགས་ཤིང་། །
ལྷ་རྨ་ཆེན་སྦོམ་[47] ར་ལ་སོགས་པས། །
གཟུགས་དངོས་[48] བསྟན་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཚུལ་བཞིན་བསྒྲུབས། །

ལར་ལས་ཅན་གྱི་སློབ་མ་མང་པོ་ལ། །
ཐག་རིང་པོ་ནས་ཞལ་གཟིགས་བྱིན་གྱིས་བརླབས། །

རྒྱལ་[49] སྲོང་བཙན་སྒམ་པོར་ཞལ་བཞེས་ཤིང་། །
ཁྲིམས་ཆོས་བཞིན་སྐྱོང་བའི་བཀའ་གཉན་པས། །
རྒྱུད་མ་རུངས་པ་རྣམས་འཇིགས་ཤིང་སྐྲག །[50]

On the road going to China,
[Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho] saw the faces of the glorious group of religious protectors and
Such [local] deities as Rma chen sbom ra[51]
Manifest [their] forms and carry out activities [on his behalf] correctly.

Generally, the many disciples of good karma
Were blessed by [his] glance from afar.

[The deities of place] made promises to Srong btsan sgam po, and
Heard [his] order to preserve laws in accordance with religion.
So those with minds not conformed [to this] were frightened.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho attributes the taming of the local deities to the presence of the Dalai Lama, just as numerous Tibetan sources attributed the taming of the local deities around Bsam yas to

[47] *sbom* CD; *bom* B; *pom* A.
[48] *dngos* CD; *ngos* AB.
[49] *rgyal* AB; *rgyal bo* CD.
[50] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 310-11/ 275.
[51] Rma chen sbom [or: spom] ra is the deity of place of the mountain range A mnyes rma chen. See Rock, *The Amnye Ma chhen Range and Adjacent Regions: A Monographic Study*; and Katia Buffetrille, "The Great Pilgrimage of A mnyes rma chen: Written Tradition, Living Realities," in *Maṇḍala and Landscape*, ed. A. W. MacDonald (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 1997).

Padmasaṃbhava, before the first Tibetan monastery was constructed in Central Tibet. This indicates that Skal ldan rgya mtsho thought of Amdo as a spiritually backward area that was then transformed by the presence of the Dalai Lama into a place where Buddhism could take hold.

Some teachers living in Amdo or coming through Amdo were from Dbus, and others were native. Those whose homeland was Amdo frequently went to Dbus to study and then returned and established schools and/or had disciples. Dbus was the place that they tended to look up to as the source of discipline and other teachings, and through their efforts, new monasteries were established in Amdo. In Mgur XII-2, Skal ldan rgya mtsho sings of the discipline, already long established in Dbus Gtsang, which the practitioners in Mdo smad (Amdo) must learn:

དབུས་གཙང་གི་སྒྲུབ་སྡེ་རྙིང་པ་རུ།
ཚད་ལྡན་གྱི་དམ་པས་བཅས་པའི་ཁྲིམས།
མདོ་སྨད་ཀྱི་སྒོམ་པ་གསར་བུ་ལ།
འཕྲལ་འཕྲལ་དུ་སློབ་པ་འདི་གལ་རེ་ཆེ།[52]

As for the law which was established by reliable holy ones
In the old seminaries for tantric practice of Dbus Gtsang,
This, which is to be learned quickly, is greatly important
For the meditation beginners of Mdo smad.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho sings about the spread of Dge lugs pa and what it means to him personally in Mgur XII-30:

དེང་སང་ལྷོ་ཕྱོགས་འཛམ་གླིང་། །
བསྟན་པའི་ཉི་མ་ཤར་ནས། །
སྐྱེ་དགུ་རྣམས་ལ་ལེགས་ཚོགས། །
ཡར་ངོའི་ཟླ་ལྟར་[53] འཕེལ་འདུག །

[52] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 293/ 259.
[53] *ltar* ABC; *bzang* D.

སྒོས་[54] སུ་གངས་ཅན་ཁྲོད་འདི་ར། །
རྒྱལ་བ་བློ་བཟང་གྲགས་པའི། །
བསྟན་པ་ཆེས་ཆེར་དར་བས། །
མཁས་གྲུབ་དཔག་མེད་བྱུང་ངོ། །

ཡང་སྒོས་[55] ཨ་མདོའི་ཕྱོགས་འདི་ར། །
བཤད་སྒྲུབ་བསྟན་པ་དེང་སང་། །
ཉིན་བཞིན་ཆེས་ཆེར་རྒྱས་སོ། །
ཚུལ་འདི་བསམས་ཏེ་སྐྱིད་པ། །

ཏ་ཏ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ། །
བསྟན་པའི་སྙིང་པོ་རང་སེམས། །
ཆོས་དང་མཐུན་པར་བྱེད་པ། །
ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་རེམ་རེམ་སྒྲུབས་ཤིག །[56]

These days [in] the southern Jambudvıpa-world
The sun of the teaching shines, and
Good accumulations[57] have increased in all sentient beings
Like the first fortnight’s [waxing] moon.

In particular here amidst the snowy region,
Since the teaching of the Victorious One, Blo bzang grags pa,
Is spreading more and more,
Limitless scholars and practitioners have appeared.

Even more particularly, in this region, Amdo,
These days the teaching of explanations and practice
Has become more widespread by the day.

Having thought about this, [I] am happy.

Uh huh! Skal ldan rgya mtsho!
The essence of the teaching

[54] *sgos* BCD; *dgos* A.
[55] *sgos* BD; *dgos* AC.
[56] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 330/ 292
[57] This refers to the accumulations of wisdom and merit.

Is making [your] own mind harmonize with religion.
Practice great diligence!

Skal ldan rgya mtsho sings again about the spread of Buddhism in Amdo, and his delight in it, in Mgur XIII-26:

ད་ལྟ་བྱང་ཕྱོགས་ཨ་མདོ་ན། །
སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པའི་ཉི་མ་ཤར། །
བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་སྡེ་ནི་ཡར་ཡར་རྒྱས། །
གནས་ཚུལ་འདི་བསམས་ན་ཉམས་རེ་སྐྱོ། །

མདོ་ཁམས་ཀྱི་མི་ཚོར་དད་པ་ཆེ། །
དགེ་སྡིག་གི་རྣམ་བཞག་ཤེས་པ་མང་། །

ཆོས་ལྡན་གྱི་བྱ་བ་བཟང་པོ་དེས། །
རང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་པ་རྒྱ་ཆེན་སྟེར། །[58]

Now in the northern region, Amdo,
The sun of Buddha's teaching has risen.
Communities of schools of explanation and practice have increased more and more.
When [I] think[59] of this situation, [my] mind takes only delight.

The faith in the people of Mdo Khams is great.
Many know [how] to distinguish virtue and sin.

Through good pious deeds,
[I] give vast benefit to myself and others.

Some teachers recognized that there were many powerful places in Amdo. This is an excerpt from XI-10:

ཇེ་དུས་གསུམ་མཁྱེན་དེའི་བཀའ་ལུང་ལས།
སྤྱིར་ཨ་མདོར་གྲུབ་པའི་གནས་མང་ཞིང་།
སྒོས་[60] ཇེ་ཀིན་མཚོ་བཅས་ཡ་མཚན་གསུངས།[61]

[58] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 359/ 318.
[59] I am interpreting the verb as reflecting the present, according to context.
[60] *sgos* BCD; *dgos* A.
[61] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 265/ 234.

According to the prophesy of the lord, the omniscient one of the
three times [Rgyal sras Rin po che Blo bzang bstan ’dzin[62]],
“In general in Amdo there are many places [where one can obtain]
spiritual powers, and
In particular, Ji kin Lake is wondrous,” [he] said.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho and Chos pa Rin po che surely think that one of the great benefits of being in Amdo is that there are so many quiet places of natural beauty where one can live and practice in solitude. And Amdo was of course the birthplace of the founder of the Dge lugs pa school, Tsong kha pa (1357–1419). In the following excerpt, the introduction to Mgur XI-21, Skal ldan rgya mtsho links Bkra shis ’khyil,[63] a hermitage he lived in for many years, to that spot spatially:

རྗེ་རྒྱལ་བ་གཉིས་པ་འཁྲུངས་པའི་གནས།
ཤར་ཙོང་ཁའི་སྐུ་འབུམ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྡེའི།
ཕྱོགས་ལྷོ་ངོས་རེབ་གོང་ཡུལ་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི།
གནས་དབེན་པ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་འཁྱིལ་བ་ན།
ཆོས་བསམ་གཏན་སྒྲུབ་ལ་ཡིད་སྨོན་པའི།
ངེད་དགེ་སློང་བརྒྱ་ཉིའི་རི་ཁྲོད་པས།
ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་དང་བའི་དད་པ་ཡིས།
ཚིག་སྙན་པའི་གླུ་འདི་མཆོད་པར་འབུལ།[64]

In the hermitage Bkra shis ’khyil
Of the district of Reb gong,
South of the religious community of Sku ’bum in eastern
Tsong kha,
The place where the lord, Second Victorious One was born,
Because of [my] faith in pure body, speech and mind

[62] Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan ’dzin (b. 17th cent.) was a lama of Skal ldan rgya mtsho in Amdo, when the latter had just returned from Dbus at age twenty-one until at least through age fifty-nine.

[63] (Rong bo) Bkra shis ’khyil, distinguished from Bla brang Bkra shis ’khyil, is a solitary hermitage that is a steep climb of about 4 hours hiking west of Reb gong. It is in a forest, and became one of Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s favorite hermitages. For information on Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s life and activities at Bkra shis ’khyil, see Appendix B.

[64] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 283/ 250.

[And my] desire to practice states of contemplation of religion,
I, the mountain hermit who is close to one hundred monks,
Give this song of mellifluous words as an offering.

Amdo, the birthplace of Tsong kha pa and the site of the eight holy places of Reb gong and of numerous beautiful hermitages has the tradition and environment to once again be a place of rich spiritual growth. What actions does Skal ldan rgya mtsho take to ameliorate the problems there resulting from Mongol domination, corruption among the Tibetan communities and lack of teaching? He writes numerous books, gives numerous teachings to hundreds of disciples, and founds and takes care of two schools whose teachings and practices span the Mahāyāna spectrum. He himself is responsible for a great expansion of the Dge lugs pa school in the region. And his disciples go on to found numerous monasteries themselves over a vast region of Amdo.[65]

As far as dealings with the Mongols are concerned, Skal ldan rgya mtsho becomes the personal chaplain of the Tümed lord Qoloči shortly before 1652.[66] In the 1660s and 70s, Skal ldan rgya mtsho is the personal chaplain of the *Ju nang*, the Mongol lord of his region.[67]

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[65] Ngag dbang lists about thirty disciples of Skal ldan rgya mtsho who founded some forty monasteries or schools in *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 95-98. Skal ldan rgya mtsho considered 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648–1722, who went on to found Bla brang Bkra shis 'khyil monastery) one of his principle disciples. See 'Jigs med theg mchog, *Rong bo dgon chen gyi gdan rabs rdzogs ldan gtam gyi rang sgra* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988), 189.

[66] Qoloči was obviously very pleased with the relationship, as he stated "Before, I did not take you as [my] lama, and [I] was pierced from a stirred-up heart, violating [what was right]." See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 37.

[67] Unfortunately, this title was used by both Western and Eastern Mongols, and I have not been able to ascertain the tribe of this particular Mongol patron of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. However, the patron may well have been Qoshot, since that tribe was the principle one in power in Amdo at that time. In *The Annals of Kokonor*, whose second chapter deals with the Qoshot rulers in the area, Gushri Khan and his descendants, Sum pa Mkhan po records an incident towards the end of the seventeenth century of the Kangxi emperor of the Qing dynasty honoring a Qoshot with the title and gifts:

> The Emperor conferred the title of *Ching wang* on Bkra shis pa thur, the youngest of Gu shri Khan, and in succession [conferred] such titles as *Jun wang*,..... on others, along with a large number of gifts.

Sum pa Mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor, *The Annals of Kokonor*, Hochin Yang, ed., trans., Uralic and Altaic Series 106 (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1969), 43.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho gives the *Ju nang* whatever teachings he requests, such as tantric rituals, prayers for his long life, and so on.[68] On the occasion of the *Ju nang*'s mother's death, more than one hundred of the *Ju nang*'s entourage receive their vows from Skal ldan rgya mtsho.[69] And the Mongol leader the *Ju nang*, "the great governor, patron of the teaching," patronizes him.[70] Even upon an occasion when Skal ldan rgya mtsho gives lavish gifts to the *Ju nang*, he actually requests that the *Ju nang* give gifts back to the monastic community.[71] And the *Ju nang* promises to do so. Not able to rid the area of Mongol domination, Skal ldan rgya mtsho makes the most of his relationship with the *Ju nang*, whether by receiving the *Ju nang*'s patronage for Rong bo monastery or by bringing about an increased commitment to Buddhism among the Mongols themselves.

Considering Skal ldan rgya mtsho's huge role in the spread of Dge lugs pa in the eastern part of the Tibetan world, it is obvious that he was highly modest in singing the following song, Mgur IX-5:

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ང་ནི།
དབུས་སུ་སློབ་གཉེར་གང་ནུས་བགྱིས་ནས།
ཁམས་ཀྱི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་བསྟན་པ་སྤེལ་བས།
ད་ལྟ་སྙན་པའི་གྲགས་པ་འབར་རོ།

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ང་ནི།
ད་ལྟ་རི་ཁྲོད་འགྲིམ་པའི་འཁོར་མང་། །
དེ་ཀུན་ཁ་ལོ་ཆོས་ལ་སྒྱུར་དང་། །
ནམ་ཞིག་རང་དང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་ནོ། །

....

It may be that the K'ang hsi emperor had similarly honored the patron of Skal ldan rgya mtsho several decades earlier.

68 This also occurred in 1676. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 104.

69 This was in 1669. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 65.

70 The occasions mentioned are in 1661 or 62 and in 1676. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 46, 104.

71 This occurred in 1676. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 104.

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ང་ནི། །
ནོར་ཡང་མང་སྦྱི་ཚོགས་སུ་བསྔོས་སོ། །
ཆོས་ཀྱང་ཤེས་དེ་མི་ལ་བཤད་དོ། །
ལོ་ཡང་ལོན་ཀྱང་བདེ་ཞིང་སྐྱིད་དོ། །

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ལགས་སོ། །[72]

A la la, as for me, an old monk who strolls around the country,
Having done as much study as possible in Dbus,
Because of increasing the teaching in the area of Khams,
Now [my] fame is burning.

A la la, as for me an old monk who strolls around the country,
Now the entourage which roves the mountain hermitages is large.
Steer them all to religion!
When will [I] benefit myself and others?

....

A la la, as for me an old monk who strolls around the country,
[My] wealth also is much. [I] have dedicated offerings.
Buddhism also [I] know. [I] have explained it to people.
Although [my] years are passing, [I] am well and happy.

A la la, [I] am an old monk who strolls around the country.

[72] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 204-5/ 180-81.

CHAPTER TWO

SOLITARY HERMITAGES

At the age of twenty-one, in 1627, Skal ldan rgya mtsho returned to Amdo after a ten-year study period at Dga' ldan monastery outside Lhasa.[1] Upon arrival in his homeland he already had the propensity to practice alone in solitary places,[2] but his older brother, Chos pa Rin po che, strongly urged him to found two schools.[3] These were Thos bsam gling at Rong bo monastery and Bka' gdams pho brang at Bkra shis 'khyil, which he established in 1630 and 1648, respectively. His older brother made strong requests that he continue to oversee and sustain these schools. This was evident even in Chos pa Rin po che's last words before death, found in Mgur XII-13:

མགོན་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་མངའ་བླ་མ་མཆོག །
ཕ་སངས་རྒྱས་དག་ཞིང་ཕེབས་པའི་ཚེ། །
མི་བདག་ལ་གསུང་གི་ཐ་མ་ལ། །
ཆོས་བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པ་སྐྱོངས་ཤིག་གསུངས། །

....

ཐུགས་མཉེས་པར་བྱེད་པའི་ཐབས་དམ་པ། །
ཆོས་བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
རང་གང་ནུས་ཀྱི་རིང་ལ་འཛིན་ནོ་སྙམ། །[4]

When the protector, the supreme lama having great compassion,
The father, was going to the pure Buddha field,
In [his] last words to me [he] said,
"Do take care of the teachings of the religious college and the
    seminary for tantric studies."

....

[1] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 6, 13.
[2] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 20.
[3] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 21-22, 29-31.
[4] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 312/ 276.

> [I] thought, 'For as long as I am able, I will take hold of the
> precious teachings
> Of the religious college and the seminary for tantric studies,
> The holy means for making [his] mind take delight.'

On the one hand, Skal ldan rgya mtsho wanted to obey Chos pa Rin po che's last testament. On the other hand, he had strong inclinations to live the solitary life of a hermit, not least because of continual influence from Chos pa Rin po che's story of his own liberation. What did hermitages mean to Skal ldan rgya mtsho and how did he resolve the tensions he felt between taking care of the schools and pursuing a life of solitude?

Chos pa Rin po che's life story contained a whole series of mixed messages for Skal ldan rgya mtsho. Though Chos pa Rin po che spent five years doing pilgrimage and receiving teachings, most notably from the first Paṇ chen Lama,[5] in the main monasteries of the Lhasa region, upon returning to Reb gong in 1608, his focus turned to practice in solitary mountain retreats. At the time of his older brother's return, Skal ldan rgya mtsho was only two. During the next nine years, it seems that Chos pa Rin po che spent a lot of time in hermitages and did not undertake religious activities other than applying himself diligently to his tutelary deity.[6] Though Chos pa Rin po che was already involved in this next stage of his life, he still had some conventional objectives for his younger brother, taught him to read and write, and ordained him.[7]

In 1617 Chos pa Rin po che temporarily interrupted his way of life to take Skal ldan rgya mtsho to Dbus. There Chos pa Rin po che entrusted the monks of Dga' ldan with the care and extensive traditional education of his eleven-year old brother.[8]

[5] Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa dad pa'i 'dren byed*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), vol. Ka-2, 2b.3-4a.6. This will henceforth be referred to as Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987).

[6] I have surmised this from the fact that there is very little written in the biography of Chos pa Rin po che for the years 1608–1616. See Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 4a.6-5a.1.

[7] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 4.

[8] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 6; Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 5a.1-2.

After Skal ldan rgya mtsho returned home to Amdo in 1627, his aim was essentially to do tantric practices in solitary places.[9] Chos pa Rin po che discouraged him from this and requested that he found a philosophical college at Rong bo monastery in Reb gong and later a seminary for tantric studies at Bkra shis 'khyil.[10] Despite the pressures Skal ldan rgya mtsho felt in caring for the two schools, his biographer tells us that he was also able to spend time meditating in mountain retreats, where he "sang many *mgur* melodies which had to do with being cheerful in solitary places."[11]

His movement from focusing on taking care of the schools to becoming a hermit is exhibited in Mgur VII-14. Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho manages to link both ways of life to his veneration for his brother:

དུས་ད་ནས་ཇི་སྲིད་ནུས་ཀྱི་བར། །
ཆོས་བཤད་སྒྲུབ་གང་རུང་སྒོ་ནས་ནི། །
ཁྱེད་མཉེས་པའི་ཐབས་ལ་འབད་པར་བྱ། །

བདག་རོང་འབྲོག་གི་ས་ཕྱོགས་མང་ཕྱིན་ཀྱང་། །
སེམས་ཆོས་དང་འདྲེས་པ་དཀོན་པར་མཐོང་། །

ལར་ཡང་དང་ཡང་དུ་བསམས་ཙ་ན། །
མགོན་ཁྱོད་ལ་དད་པ་ལྷག་པར་སྐྱེས། །

....

ནོར་ཟང་ཟིང་གི་རྙེད་བཀུར་མི་འདོད་པར[12]། །
དུས་རྒྱུན་དུ་སྒྲུབ་ལ་རྟག་གཞོལ་བའི། །
རྩོལ་འདི་བསམས་མོས་གུས་ཆེས་ཆེར་གསོལ། །[13]

From now on, for as long as [I] am able,
[I] will strive [to find] a way to please you
In the manner of whatever is suitable for the religious college and
the seminary for tantric studies.

[9] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 21.
[10] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 21-22, 29-31.
[11] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 20.
[12] *par* ABC; *pa* D.
[13] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 157/ 139.

Although I have gone to many places with valleys and pastureland,
[I] have seen [how] rare [it is] for the mind to have integrated with
religion.

Generally, when [I] thought about this again and again,
[My] faith in you, Protector, increased.

....

Not wanting to be paid the honor of wealth and things,
[I] have thought of this manner of perpetually applying myself
diligently to continual practice,
[And I] have been greatly moved [in my] veneration [for you].

In Mgur VII-13, he reminds himself of the impermanence of the things for which he was responsible:

ཉོན་དང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་བ[14]། །
རོང་བོའི་དགོན་དང་གྲྭ་ཚང་གཉིས། །
གདན་གྱི་དགོན་སྡེ་གྲྭ་ཚང་མིན། །[15]

Listen, the one of the ocean of good fortune,[16]
Neither Rong bo monastery nor the seminary
Is a perpetual monastic community or assemblage.

The impermanence of the monastery and community justifies further Skal ldan rgya mtsho's desire to let go of them and move on to a life of solitude. In Mgur XIII-17a he clearly associates continuing to oversee and sustain the school of explanation and the practice section with a lack of happiness:

བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པ་འཛིན་འདོད་ཀྱང་། །
སེམས་ཉིད་འདི་མ་ཐུལ་གང་དགར་ཤོར། །[17]

---

[14] *ba* BCD; *nga* A.
[15] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 155/ 138.
[16] Skal ldan rgya mtsho adds the nominative particle *ba* to his name here, so I have translated it literally (*skal ldan* = good fortune, *rgya mtsho* = ocean).
[17] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 350/ 311.

Although [I] wanted to hold on to the teachings of the religious
college and the seminary for tantric studies,
[If I] had not tamed this mind itself, what would have broken out
into happiness?

In Mgur VII-18, he speaks of going to hermitages in terms of following in Chos pa Rin po che's footsteps and not "wavering":

རྗེ་བློ་བཟང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་སྲིད་ལ། །
དབང་འདོད་དགུར་བསྒྱུར་བའི་འགྲོ་བའི་མགོན། །
ཕ་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ཞབས་ལ་འདུད། །

ཉམས་རྟོགས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་རྒྱས་པར་མཛོད། །

མགོན་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་བ་ལས། །
དཔལ་ཐུབ་དབང་བསྟན་པའི་སྙོ་རུ་ཞུགས། །

གཞུང་ལུགས་བཤད་མང་ལ་ཐོས་བསམ་བྱས། །

ཆོས་གང་ཤེས་བློ་གསལ་ཚོགས་རྣམས་ལ། །
སེམས་གཡོ་སྒྱུ་མེད་པར་ལེགས་པར་བཤད། །

ད་མགོན་ཁྱོད་རྣམ་ཐར་རྗེས་ཞུགས་ནས། །
གནས་དབེན་པའི་དགའ་ཚལ་ཉམས་དགར་འགྲོ །

མི་སྐྱུ་སེར་མང་པོ་སྦྲོན་ཆད་ངས། །
ནོར་ཞབས་ཏོག་ཙམ་གྱི་ཆེད་དུ་བསླུས། །

ད་མི་མགོ་ནོར་ཕྱིར་མི་སྐོར་ཆེད། །
བདག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རི་ཁྲོད་དགོན་པར་འགྲོ །[18]

[I] bow at the feet of Lord Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal [mtshan and]
The father [Blo bzang] bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan,
Protector of sentient beings who have transformed all desires
in existence.
Please make the qualities of [my] knowledge vast.

[18] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 161/ 143.

> Protector, on the basis of your having received [me as a disciple],
> [I] entered the door of the glorious Buddha's teaching.
>
> [I] heard and thought about many good explanations of books.
>
> [I] explained whatever teaching that [I] knew, without deception and well,
> To clear-minded groups.
>
> Now, having followed your story of liberation,
> [I] am going to a delightful grove of a hermitage.
>
> I formerly deceived many monks and lay people
> For the purpose of mere wealth and servants.
>
> Now, in order that [I] not waver for the sake of wealth,
> I, Skal ldan, am going to a mountain hermitage.

In spite of his numerous responsibilities in taking care of his philosophical college, Thos bsam gling, at Rong bo and of his seminary for tantric studies at Bkra shis 'khyil, staying in solitary places remains a central theme for Skal ldan rgya mtsho. And in 1669, at the age of sixty-three, he lets go of his formal position at Thos bsam gling after caring for it for forty years,[19] and a year later makes Bkra shis 'khyil his principle hermitage for the rest of his life.[20]

Mgur XIII-14, a song with only four lines, states his pleasure in hermitages very simply:

[19] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 66. Blo bzang chos grags, a direct disciple of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, was appointed lama to the philosophical school of Thos bsam gling at Rong bo ten years after Skal ldan rgya mtsho had founded it. See Skal ldan, *Mdo smad a mdo'i phyogs su bstan pa dar tshul gyi lo rgyus*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), folio 8b.5; 'Jigs med theg mchog, *Rong bo dgon chen*, 189; and Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 95. Blo bzang chos grags continued to teach at Thos bsam gling after Skal ldan rgya mtsho retired from his responsibilities there.

[20] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 66. Although his biographer tells us that Skal ldan rgya mtsho took care of both the religion and patronage of the seminary for tantric studies for thirty years (1648–1677), judging from his *mgur*, in the last years his activities, if any, were very light. He was living at Bkra shis 'khyil anyway, and at some point, Sha brang Rin po che Bya btang Blo bzang rgya mtsho started taking care of the tantric seminary, and continued in that position for many years. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 97.

དལ་འབྱོར་འདི་བསྐལ་བརྒྱར་རྙེད་པར་དཀའ། །
དགེ་སྦྱོར་ལ་འབད་པ་གང་ཆེ་འཚེང་[21]། །
གཅིག་པུ་རུ་དབེན་ཁང་ཉམས་དགའ་བར། །
དགེ་སྦྱོར་ལ་བརྩོན་པ་སྐལ་བ་བཟང་། །[22]

It is difficult to obtain this leisure support in one hundred *kalpa*s.
Exerting [myself] in accumulating merit, however great, [I] am content.

Striving to accumulate merit alone
In a delightful solitary hut is good fortune.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho took great delight in solitude and nature. What kind of solitary places? Just about any kind, it seems, as he advises himself in Mgur VII-2. Since the Tibetan text and the complete translation can be found in the appendix, here I just offer the translation of a few verses:

You want to rely on a solitary place, mountain hermit!
When [you] generate sadness, listen to this song.
If [I] don't give myself advice,
Other friends inciting me to religion would be rare.

If you delight in solitary mountains,
Under a strong small overhang in the mountain,
There is a slate clay rock cave that has spontaneously arisen.
If [you] depend on a place like that, in the present moment and time to come [you] will be happy.

If you delight in solitary forests,
Amidst a luscious green forest
There is a cool house of the trees' leaves.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [your] joy will increase.

If you delight in solitary snow lands,
On the shoulder of a white snowy mountain
There is a cave for practices in which to stay by yourself.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [your] merit will increase.

---

21 *'tsheng* ABCD, although *'tshes* has been suggested as a better spelling.
22 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 348/ 309.

If you delight in solitary meadows,
In a large valley of beautiful wildflowers
There is a delightful small hut of green grass.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [you] will spontaneously be at peace.

If you delight in solitary caves,
On the side of a rock with a vulture's nest
There is a beautiful shelter—a natural cave.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [your] knowledge will be pure.

If you delight in a solitary place of clay,
On a clay [mountain] amidst a nest of hawks
There is at the present moment a solid cave.
If [you] depend on a place like that, whatever [you] think will be accomplished.[23]

And elsewhere in Mgur II-3 we read about his activities in solitary places:

....
བྲག་གང་འགོལ་ནགས་ཚལ་ཉམས་དགའ་དང་། །
ཕ་བླ་མ་གོང་མའི་སྒྲུབ་ཕུག་སོགས། །
གནས་དབེན་ཞིང་ཉམས་དགར་ཁ་དོན་དང་།
ཕྱག་བཟླས་བརྗོད་གཏོར་མའི་རིམ་པ་སོགས། །
ཆོས་དགེ་བའི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་གང་ནུས་འབད། །[24]

....
[I] exerted myself in areas of religion and virtue as much as I could
Such as [by doing] series of chants, prostrations, recitations and [making] *gtor ma*s,
In solitary and pleasing places such as
Whichever rock-caves, solitary places, pleasant groves, and
Caves in which [my] father, the supreme lama, has practiced and so on.

[23] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 137-38/ 122-23.
[24] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 25/ 22.

What was Skal ldan rgya mtsho looking for in his hermitages? He says what it was in Mgur VII-6. The Tibetan text is in the appendix, and I will give only excerpts from this *mgur* here:

> Lord Bstan ’dzin blo bzang, Rdo rje ’chang,
> Please look in general upon all sentient beings with compassion.
>
> ....
>
> Whenever [I] saw a delightful and pleasing mountain,
> I, Skal ldan, recalled a solitary grove.
>
> Whenever [I] heard the pleasing voices of birds and so on,
> [It] moved my mind to a solitary place.
>
> ....
>
> Whenever I saw a twisting, colorful clay [bluff],
> I thought I would go there and an earnest desire would arise in
> [my mind].
>
> ....
>
> In a very solitary grove on a mountain,
> I myself, an ancient sage,[25] practice and live alone.
>
> [I] have thought and thought about this, and desire has come about.
>
> Although I am a lama who gives instruction,
> Up to now [my] mind has not been integrated with the instructions.
>
> Now, in a pleasing solitary grove,
> Please give blessings for the meeting of [my] mind with the
> teachings.[26]

Skal ldan rgya mtsho mentions the theme of *sems dang khrid ma ’dres* or *sems dang chos ma ’dres*, the mind that is not integrated with instruction or religion, a number of times in his *mgur*, and the lack of integration he felt seems to be a principle reason for his wanting to go to solitary places to practice the teachings that he has received. In this regard I find it crucial to stress that his quest to be a

[25] *Drang srong* (= *ṛṣi*) brings to mind ancient Vedic sages who live practically forever thanks to their Ayurvedic herbal concoctions.

[26] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 143-44/ 127-28.

hermit should not be seen as a desire to break away entirely from his previous life, but rather as an effort to relieve himself from the distractions of village and monastic life, along with his formal responsibilities there, so that he could bring the teachings and rituals he previously witnessed to fulfillment within himself.

But just going to hermitages by itself is not enough. In Mgur X-21 he sings of going to a hundred of them, yet still being unable to integrate Buddhism and his own mental and emotional state:

ང་[27] གཞོན་དུས་རི་ཁྲོད་བརྒྱ་ཕྲག་འགྲིམས། །
རི་གང་དབེན་ས་རུ་གཅིག་པུར་བསྡད། །
སེམས་ཆོས་དང་ཨེ་མཐུན་བལྟས་བལྟས་ཀྱང་། །
དུས་ད་དུང་སེམས་དང་ཆོས་མ་མཐུན། །[28]

When I was young, [I] roved around one hundred mountain hermitages.
[I] stayed alone in the solitary places of whatever mountain.
Although [I] looked and looked at whether [my] mind was in harmony with religion,
Still now my mind and religion are not in harmony.

A similar theme is expressed along with deep sorrow about his lack of integration, in this excerpt from Mgur III-4:

སྤྱིར་ཆོས་སྒོར་ཞུགས་ནས་ཡུན་རིང་ཞིང་། །
སྒོས་[29] རི་ཁྲོད་བསྟེན་ནས་ལོ་མང་ཡང་། །
དུས་ད་དུང་སེམས་དང་ཆོས་མ་འདྲེས། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་འགྱོད་པ་གདིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །[30]

Although in general [I] entered the door of Buddhism a long time ago
And in particular have relied on mountain hermitages for many years,
Up to now my mind is not integrated with religion.
[I] have thought about this and regret has arisen from [my] depths.

[27] *nga* CD; *ngas* AB.
[28] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 245/ 216.
[29] *sgos* BD; *dgos* AC.
[30] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 38/ 34.

Yet sometimes he doesn't even stay when he gets to a solitary place, as he relates in Mgur III-5:

> ཚེ་འདི་བློས་བཏང་རི་ཁྲོད་བྱ་སྙམ་ཡང་། །
> རི་ལ་སླེབ་[31] ཚེ་གྲོང་ཡུལ་སྒོར་རྒྱུག་ཅིང་། །....... [32]

> Although [I] think this time that [I] will act as a renunciant
> mountain hermit,
> When [I] arrive at a mountain, I rush back to the village.......

Not only hermitages, but also lamas' teachings and studying were not enough for Skal ldan rgya mtsho. He had gone to lots of teachers and still did not feel like their teachings were sinking in. In the following part of Mgur III-3, he laments this difficulty:

> དུས་ཉིན་ཞིག་[33] སྒྲིད་གསུམ་མཐོན་པོའི་རྩེར། །
> ཕུ་སི་ཀུའི་ཛ་རྒྱུད་[34] བལྟ་རུ་ཕྱིན། །
>
> རི་གངས་དཀར་ཚར་དུ་དང་ར་བ་རྣམས། །
> ཕྱི་མིག་ཡུལ་སྣང་ཚེ་སླ་མ་དྲན། །
>
> རྗེ་མཚུངས་མེད་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་གི །
> དྲིན་བཟང་པོ་དྲན་ཏེ་སླུ་འདི་ལེན། །
>
> ཁྲིད་དང་བརྩོན་ལྡན་པའི་མཆེད་གྲོགས་རྣམས། །
> དབྱངས་འདི་ལ་དར་ཅིག་གསན་པར་ཞུ། །
>
> ཞིང་རབ་འབྱམས་བཞུགས་པའི་རྒྱལ་བ་ཀུན། །
> འབངས་དང་ལྡན་བདག་སོགས་སྣང་ངོ་རུ། །
> མགོན་སྡེ་པ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཞེས། །
> མཚན་འབྲུག་སྒྲ་ལྷ་བུར་ཡོངས་སུ་གྲགས། །
> ཕ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཅན་དེའི་བཀའ་དྲིན་ལས། །
> སྤྱིར་དབང་ལུང་རྗེས་གསུམ་གང་འདོད་དང་། །

[31] *sleb* ABD; *slebs* C.
[32] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 39/ 35-6.
[33] *zhig* BCD; *cig* A.
[34] *rgyud* AB; *brgyud* CD.

སྒོས་[35] བཙོམ་ལྡན་འཁོར་ལོ་བདེ་མཆོག་གི་ །
དབང་ཟབ་མོ་ལུང་དང་མཐུན་པར་ཐོབ། །

ཆོས་མདོ་སྔགས་ཀྱི་གནད་དོན་དུ་མ་ཞིག །
ནང་སེམས་ཉིད་སྙིང་དུ་སྐྱོར་རྩལ་ཤེས། །

དེ་ཤེས་ཀྱང་ཉམས་ལེན་མ་ནུས་པས། །
དུས་ད་དུང་ཉམས་རྟོགས་འབྲས་མ་སྨིན། །

ཆོས་མདོ་སྔགས་སྒོམ་ཁྲིད་ཟབ་ན་ཡང་། །
བདག་སྒོམ་མཁན་ལེ་ལོ་ཆེ་བ་དེས། །
ཁྲིད་ཟབ་མོ་ཞུས་ནས་ལོ་མང་ཡང་། །
དུས་ད་དུང་སེམས་དང་ཁྲིད་མ་མཇལ། །

ལྷ་བདེ་མཆོག་བྱིན་རླབས་ཆེ་ན་ཡང་། །
ཐུགས་སྐུལ་[36] བྱེད་ཀྱི་བཟླས་པ་མ་ནུས་པས། །
ལྷ་གཅིག་པུར་བཟུང་ནས་ལོ་མང་ཡང་། །
དུས་ད་དུང་རྨི་ལྟས་ཙམ་མ་བྱུང་། །

ཁོང་དད་ལྡན་སློབ་མའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་ལ། །
ཆོས་གང་འདོད་བཤད་ནས་ཡུན་རིང་ཡང་། །
མི་རང་ལ་ཉམས་མྱོང་མེད་པ་དེས། །
དུས་ད་དུང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་མ་ཐོགས། །[37]

One day on the high peak of Sgyed gsum,
I went to see the clay range of Phu se ku.

When the row of white snow mountains
Appeared as an objective field in [my] nostalgic glance, [I] recalled
[my] lama.

Recalling the good kindness of the unrivalled lord,
Bstan ’dzin blo bzang, [I] sing this song.

[35] *sgos* D, *dgos* ABC.
[36] *skul* BCD; *bskul* A.
[37] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 36-37/ 33.

You faithful and diligent spiritual friends—
Spread this song! [I] request that [you] listen!

Because of the kindness of that father who has compassion,
The protector called Sde pa Chos kyi rgyal po,
Whose name is known everywhere like the sound of thunder,
Through whom all the victorious ones who dwell in the limitless [Buddha] fields
Appear in the minds of faithful subjects such as I,
[I] obtained in general whatever empowerments, textual transmissions and tantric rituals [I] wanted,
And in particular[38] the deep empowerment of Bhagavat 'Khor lo bde mchog, in agreement with the textual transmission.

[I came to] know how to apply the many essential points
Of the sutras and tantras of Buddhism to [my] very mind.[39]

Although [I] knew that, because [I] was unable to practice,
Till now the fruits of experiential knowledge have not matured.

Although the meditation instructions of the sutras and tantras of Buddhism are deep,
Since I am a very lazy meditator,
Although [I] requested the deep instructions many years ago,
Till now [my] mind and the instructions have not met.

Although the deity Bde mchog's blessing is great,
Since [I] am not able to do recitations for inducing [the presence of his] mind,
Although [I] have taken him as [my] sole deity for many years,
Till now [even] mere signs in [my] dreams have not appeared.

Although one has explained whatever is desired of Buddhism
To assemblages of faithful disciples for a long time,
Since [that] person himself has no experience
Till now [he] has not brought benefit to others.

[38] "In particular" is a translation of *sgos*, not *dgos*. The two spellings have been frequently interchanged in many *mgur* in the various editions.

[39] I.e. Skal ldan rgya mtsho came to know in principle how to practice, how to think, and how to examine his thoughts.

But in spite of Skal ldan rgya mtsho being pessimistic at times about going to mountain hermitages to achieve his biggest desire, bringing together mind and Buddhism, this desire remained an integral part of his overall plan. He clearly idolizes Mi la ras pa,[40] and has found it fruitless to meditate in places that are not solitary, as he states in Mgur III-4:

སྔར་བླ་མ་གྲྭ་པ་ཡོན་བདག་ལ། །
ཚེ་བློས་གཏོང་སྒྲུབ་པ་ལྷུར་ལེན་ཞེས། །
ཚིག་མང་གདམ་[41] དམ་བཅའ་མང་ཕུལ་ཡང་། །
དུས་ད་དུང་ཚེ་འདི་བློས་མ་ཐོང་[42]། །

སྔོན་རི་ཁྲོད་མ་བསྟེན་གནས་སྐབས་སུ། །
དུས་ནམ་ཞིག་སྒྲུབ་པ་བྱེད་པའི་ཚེ། །
རྗེ་མི་ལ་ལྟ་བུར་བྱེད་སྙམ་ཡང་། །
ད་སྒྲུབ་ལ་ཞུགས་ཚེ་རེ་མ་བྱུང་། །

རྗེ་མི་ལ་ལྟ་བུ་ཕར་ལ་ཞོག །

དུས་ད་ལྟའི་སྒོམ་ཆེན་ཐ་མ་ལའང་། །
མིག་ཡར་བལྟས་འགྲན་པར་མི་བཟོད་ན། །
ཉམས་རྟོགས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ག་ལ་སྐྱེ། །

ས་དབེན་ཞིང་ཉམས་དགར་མི་འགྲོ་ན། །
མིང་རས་པར་བཏགས་པས་ཅི་ལ་ཕན། །[43]

Previously although [I] gave many words and many promises
To lamas, monks [and] patrons,
Saying "[I] earnestly apply [myself] to renouncing [this] life [and its concerns],"
Until now [I] have not renounced this life completely.

[40] I will deal at length with his relationship to Mi la ras pa in the next chapter.
[41] *gtam* AD; *gtams* BC.
[42] Instead, I have read *btang* here.
[43] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 38/ 34-5.

Previously in a period in which [I] was not relying on mountain hermitages,
Whenever [I] did practices,
Although [I] thought to do them in the manner of Mi la ras pa,
When [I] entered into practices then, [my] hopes were not realized.

Put away [the idea of practicing] like Mi la ras pa!

As for today's common siddhas having set [their] aims high,
If [they] cannot bear the comparison,[44]
Where will the quality of experiential knowledge arise?

If [I] don't go to a solitary and pleasing place,
What good would it do calling [myself] "*ras pa*"[45]?

There are many reasons for going to solitary places, as Skal ldan rgya mtsho chants rhythmically in this part of Mgur VII-10a. The Tibetan text is in the appendix.

When I was young, I relied on a lama.
Now that [I] am old, I have been relying on friends and patrons.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] listened to and contemplated [religion].
Now that [I] am old, [I] perform village rites for a living [and I] move to and fro on foot.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] went where monks assembled.
Now that [I] am old, [I] have been strolling around [my] home village.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] liked to stay alone.
Now that [I] am old, [I] conform with everyone.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

---

[44] I.e. with Mi la ras pa.
[45] The term *ras pa* signifies "one who wears cotton."

When I was young, [my] sadness was great.
Now that [I] am old, this life has been seized in the grasping claw
of death.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] observed the rules with purity.
Now that [I] am old, [I] act freely without shame.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] performed the holy religion.
Now that [I] am old, [I] do worldly deeds.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

[I] am going to practice in accordance with the deep religion
In a pleasing, delightful mountain hermitage.
When [you] disciples who come behind me do as I do,
Walk in my footsteps![46]

He considered staying in his home a real detriment, something he expresses strongly in Mgur VI-3:

ཕ་ཁྱིམ་དུག་སྦྲུལ་ཚང་ནས། །
གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ནས་ཐོན་པས། །
རབ་བྱུང་བསྙེན་རྫོགས་སྡོམ་པའི། །
བདུད་རྩིའི་བགོ་སྐལ་མྱོང་[47]ངོ། །[48]

Since [I] departed at a young age
From my father's house, a venomous serpent's den,
[I] experienced the fortune of obtaining the nectar of
The vows of a novice and of a fully-ordained monk.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho is sometimes very critical of himself, as in Mgur V-11, in which he takes himself strongly to task. The Tibetan text and full translation are in the appendix.

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[46] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 148/ 131.
[47] *myong* CD; *myang* AB.
[48] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 126/ 112.

Lord Blo bzang grags,[49] unequalled in kindness,
[Please] look with compassion upon [your] servant,
Skal ldan rgya mtsho, one without religion, and bless [him].

You, expert in false knowledge, cling to a pile of falsehoods
Without understanding that [your] father lama is holy,
The foundation of all good accumulations in this and future lives.
Aren't you a rotten-hearted one with the title of *Bka' bcu*?[50]

You don't understand that your present happiness
Is because of the lama's kindness.
You master of religious discourses, are you crazy or what?

You have rejected all concerns for a future life
In this time of having obtained a human body, in which acquiring a support is difficult.
You who have looked at all kinds of books, have you no mind?

You haven't given a thought to [your] lack of thought for your own death
While watching the deaths of most of [your] friends.
Should you not have pity on your own heart [for being like this]?

....

You turn away after mouthing, "[I] take refuge"
In the Three Precious Jewels, the undistorted refuge.
You, scholar, has a demon entered [your] heart?

....

You, into whose heart the demon himself has continually entered,
Are one who wavers in the nine different kinds of remorse and clings to a sense of self.
When will you ever envision anything through meditation?

[49] This refers to Tsong kha pa.

[50] *Bka' bcu pa*, the one [having mastered] ten texts, is a title given to monks. See Georges B. J. Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003), 144.

This Skal ldan rgya mtsho said to himself
With affectionate thoughts
In the mountain hermitage, the residence of the protector
Mañjuśrī.[51]

He recites a long list of things to renounce in Mgur III-1, whose Tibetan text and full translation are in the appendix. I have chosen some excerpts to cite here:

Having prostrated [myself] before the feet of glorious lamas,
I myself will give myself this talk.

....

If [you] live in a town for a long time, [you] show your own faults.
Make [your] dwelling place solitary, mountain hermit!

Food, wealth and merit are hindrances to religion.
Be satisfied with whatever occurs, mountain hermit!

If [you] have relied on bad friends, you yourself will also
get worse!
Always stay alone, mountain hermit!

....

When [you] die, there is no one at all who [can] help [you].
Don't cherish relatives greatly, mountain hermit!

....

Later, someone who gives beneficial advice will be rare.
Don't listen to everyone's speech, mountain hermit!

Don't give others powerful advice; take [it] yourself.
Ask advice from the pronouncements of the Victorious One,
mountain hermit!

....

Always take the lower place and make preparations for death.
There is no certainty as to when [you] will die, mountain hermit![52]

[51] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 104-5/ 93-94.
[52] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 33-34/ 30.

In Mgur III-9, Skal ldan rgya mtsho says that there is no benefit to eulogies, wealth and goods, merit, monasteries and religious colleges, or being close to kinsmen. In the following excerpt, he makes it clear that some of the things other Buddhists value do nothing for him:

ས་ཕྱོགས་འདིའི་ཡོན་བདག་ཕལ་ཆེ་བས། །
དུས་དེང་སང་བདག་ལ་འབུལ་བ་བྱེད། །
ནོར་དངོས་པོས་ཕན་རྒྱུ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད། །
སྐུ་བསོད་ཁྱོད་ཇི་ལྟར་དགྱེས་དགྱེས་མཛོད། །

དགོན་གྲྭ་ཚང་ཁྲི་གོག་ལ་སོགས་པ། །
དུས་དེང་སང་བདག་གིར་བཟུང་ན་ཡང་། །
དགོན་ཆོས་གྲྭས་ཕན་རྒྱུ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད། །
དགོན་ཆོས་གྲྭ་ཇི་ལྟར་དགྱེས་དགྱེས་མཛོད། །[53]

The majority of patrons of this area
These days make offerings to me.
Wealth and goods cause no benefit at all.
Merit—make [me] very pleased in any way!

Although these days [I] have taken as mine
A monastery, seminary, a clay throne, etc.,
A monastery and religious college cause no benefit at all.
Monastery and religious college—make [me] very pleased in
any way!

It is ironic that wealth comes to him anyway, pouring like rain, and that the wealth that pours involuntarily upon him stirs up more desire. Hence, he goes to a hermitage to let go of these desires, as he sings in Mgur XI-22:

ང་ཡུན་རིང་རི་ཁྲོད་འགྲིམས་འགྲིམས་པས། །
ནོར་དངོས་པོ་ཆེད་དུ་མི་གཉེར་ཡང་། །

[53] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 47/ 42-3.

དུས་ད་ལྟ་བསོད་ནམས་རྒྱས་དྲགས་[54] པས། །
ནོར་དངོས་པོ་གང་འདོད་ཆར་ལྟར་བབས། །

ཚེ་སྔ་མའི་བག་ཆགས་ཤུགས་[55] དྲག་པས། །
ནོར་མི་འདོད་བྱས་ཀྱང་འདོད་པས་གདུང་། །
རི་མཐོན་པོར་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད་ནུས་ན། །
ཆོས་གང་བྱས་ལམ་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་ངེས། །[56]

Because for a long time I wandered around mountain hermitages,
Although [I] do not take pains [to acquire] wealth and goods,
Now at present [my] merit has increased fiercely.
So wealth, goods, whatever is desired, have fallen like rain.

Because of the strong power of inclinations from [my] past lives,
Though not having caused a desire for wealth [in this life], [I] am afflicted by desire.
When [I] am able to stay alone on a high mountain,
Whatever teaching [I] practice is sure to take [me] on the path.

But it is not all so dark for Skal ldan rgya mtsho, as he finds a balance of solitude, practice and renunciation, and is happy. In Mgur VII-11, he gives a long description of the beauties of Se ku, its mountain slopes, waters, valley, birds, alpine pastures, wild edibles, and lack of the clamor found in towns. Then he chants of the sixteen causes for happiness. The Tibetan text is in the appendix.

In that cave, because I, Skal ldan ras pa,
Have covered [my] body with maroon, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have sung a sonorous song, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have lived without mental suffering, [I] am happy.
Because by day [I] have performed whatever religious practices possible, [I] am happy.
Because in the night [I] have lain happily on [my] side, [I] am happy.
Because [I]'ve not been put in a stocks by a greatly powerful lord, [I] am happy.

[54] *drags* CD; *drag* AB.
[55] *shugs* BCD; *shug* A.
[56] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 284/ 251-2.

Because [I] have no need for the care of people around me or kinsmen, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have made friends with both marmots and mice, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have read many stories of spiritual realization, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have run about on mountain peaks several times, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have stayed most of the time at the site of [my] bed, [I] am happy.
Because daily [I] am free from hunger and thirst, [I] am happy.
Because for a long time [I] have focused single-mindedly on religion, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have preserved as much as possible [my] vows [and] promises, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have read the *Chos thun drug rnal 'byor*,[57] [I] am happy.
Because [I] have made gifts, holding back neither flesh nor blood, [I] am happy.[58]

Skal ldan rgya mtsho brings renunciation, practice, solitude, and natural beauty together, so that he can have what he has been looking for. And in this excerpt from Mgur I-7, he acknowledges that his mind has been integrated with Buddhism:

དབེན་པར་གཅིག་པུར་གནས་པས་ཆོས་དང་མཐུན། །
ཆོས་དང་མཐུན་པས་དགའ་བདེ་ངང་གིས་འཕེལ། །[59]

Because [I] loved alone in solitude, [my mind] is in harmony with religion.
Because [my mind] is in harmony with religion, [my] happiness is spontaneously increasing.

[57] This is one of the texts on the yogas of the six periods to be done throughout the day.
[58] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 153/ 136.
[59] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 13/ 12.

CHAPTER THREE

CONNECTIONS WITH MI LA RAS PA

> The Three Precious Ones, supporting all
> In the realm of Non-doing Awareness—
> I realize them all!
> Why then should I pray to them?
> Happy is the practice of Yoga
> Without Mantra and muttering![1]
>
> ....
>
> As a result of my meditation I have achieved total awakening wherein the object meditated upon, the action of meditating, and the subject who meditates merge into one, so that now I no longer know how to meditate.[2]

Mi la ras pa thus describes his direct path to Buddhahood. The famed late eleventh-early twelfth century siddha never studied in a monastery and never tried to found a school or organization. Nevertheless, he has been revered in Tibet from his time on for his way of life and for his *mgur*.

All Tibetans know his life story that poignantly illustrates the themes of karma, perseverance for liberation from rebirth in one lifetime, the necessity of a guru to gain truth within oneself and asceticism.[3] Briefly, Mi la ras pa's father died when he was seven,

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[1] Garma C. C. Chang, ed., trans., *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, vol. 1 (Boston: Shambhala, 1989), 153. (I will henceforth refer to both or either volumes of this work as Chang, trans., *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa.)*

[2] Lobsang P. Lhalungpa, trans., *The Life of Milarepa* (Boston: Shambhala, 1985), 146.

[3] From around the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards, Mi la ras pa's life (*rnam thar*) and songs (*mgur ma*) were generally known from the fifteenth century compilations of each of them by Gtsang smyon He ru ka (1452–1507), since he had woodblock carvings of them made. These are the versions that Skal ldan rgya mtsho would have been familiar with. Lhalungpa translated the biography (*Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*) into English in *The Life of Milarepa*. Chang translated Mi la ras pa's *mgur* (*Mi la mgur 'bum*) in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*.

Gtsang smyon compiled the biography in 1488. Other versions of Mi la ras pa's life predated it, such as the *Bu chen bcu gnyis*, the *Mdzod nag ma*, *Mkha' spyod*

and then his paternal uncle and aunt robbed his mother, sister and him of their heritage and forced them to work as laborers. Encouraged by his mother, Mi la ras pa learned black magic in order to avenge the injustice done to him, and brought about the death of thirty-five paternal relatives.

Later, Mi la ras pa repented and searched for a master who could give him initiations and scriptures, yet though he practiced, he could not make progress due to his bad karma. He sought to study with Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros (11th century), who refused to give him the teachings until he built a tower. Mi la ras pa was willing to undergo almost any amount of torment inflicted by Mar pa in order to receive his teachings, and built a tower and tore it down over and over for him; Mar pa at the same time was determined to force his young disciple to pay back the bad karma of his earlier days by continuing to make him do the agonizing labor. Finally, Mar pa gave Mi la ras pa tantric initiations.

Mi la ras pa went off to solitary places to live a life of retreat as a very strict ascetic, practicing under very severe conditions of cold weather while wearing little or absolutely no clothing, and often eating only nettles. He taught others through stories sung spontaneously of his own personal experience—how he subdued demons and how he converted some of his disciples—in order to advise others how to live and how to practice. Although he had sought scriptures and initiations with vigor earlier in his life, he now shunned compulsive book-learning and complex tantric rituals. During this period he again exhibited many powers, but instead of the black magic of his youth, now his flying, walking across water, entering a yak horn, being impervious to arrows, transforming himself into many bodies and so on all had the purpose of teaching others.[4] Finally, he entered Nirvana, amidst many miraculous signs.

Mi la ras pa was a principal link in receiving and passing down teachings of the Indian siddhas Tilopa and Nāropa, which Mar pa brought to Tibet and taught outside of any monastic establishment. Although it was Mi la ras pa's disciples and disciples of disciples who actually founded the various subsects of the Bka' brgyud pa

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dbang po, and *Rgyal thang pa*. See Francis Vincent Tiso, "A Study of the Buddhist Saint in Relation to the Biographical Tradition of Milarepa" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1989) for a discussion of versions of the hagiography.

4 Chang, trans., *Hundred Thousand Songs*, 451, 160, 429, 287 and 593.

order, Bka' brgyud pas honor Mi la ras pa as one of the most important founding saints of their lineage. When Gushri Khan installed the fifth Dalai Lama on the throne of Tibet in 1642, three centuries of civil war came to a close. Up to that time, the Dge lugs pas had been at war with the Karma pas, a subsect of the Bka' brgyud pa, for several centuries. Yet Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote the following homage to the first lama of the Karma pa lineage, Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–93), in Mgur XI-24:

> རྗེ་དུས་གསུམ་མཁྱེན་པའི་ཀརྨ་པ། །
> དཔལ་ཁམས་པ་དབུ་སེའི་ཞབས་ལ་འདུད། །[5]
>
> [I] bow at the feet of the Lord, Karma pa Dus gsum mkhyen pa,
> The glorious Khams pa, Dbu se.

and Skal ldan rgya mtsho showed further ecumenical reverence to the series of Karma pas in his petition for their blessings, called

> རྗེ་ཀརྨ་པ་སྔ་ཕྱི་རྣམས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པ་
> *Petition to Former and Later Karma pas*[6]

It would have been unlikely that Skal ldan rgya mtsho and Chos pa Rin po che could have praised the Karma pas and had open connections with Mi la ras pa, saints of the opposing side in the war, if they had lived in Lhasa. However, it was probably largely because they were off in Amdo that they could relate to these figures as they did. How did Skal ldan rgya mtsho and Chos pa Rin po che legitimize their bonds with Mi la ras pa, what did they esteem about him and how did they emulate his way of life? Those are some of the themes I will explore in this chapter, which consists of two sections. The first will deal with Chos pa Rin po che's connections with Mi la ras pa and the second will deal with Skal ldan rgya mtsho's.

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[5] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 288/ 255.

[6] For this, see Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), vol. Ka-8 (*Rje skal ldan rgya mtsho'i gsung las bstod tshogs kyi rim pa rnams*, *Cycles of Eulogies*), third text; Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999), vol. 1, pp. 268-69. All the Karma pas up to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's time are petitioned here except the seventh.

Chos pa Rin po che's Relationship to Mi la ras pa

སྔོན་གྱི་མི་ལ་རས་པ་དེ། །
ད་ལྟ་རོང་བོའི་ཆོས་པར་སྣང་། །[7]

He, that Mi la ras pa of former times,
Has now appeared as a religious practitioner of Rong bo.[8]

The most notable figure that Chos pa Rin po che is said to be a reincarnation of is the siddha Mi la ras pa. Skal ldan rgya mtsho sings of this in his eulogy to the previous reincarnations of Chos pa Rin po che, Mgur I-5, entitled

བཀའ་དྲིན་འཁོར་མེད་ཀྱི་བླ་མ་དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ལ་རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལ་རས་པ་སོགས་སུ་སྐུའི་སྐྱེ་བ་བཞེས་ཚུལ་གྱི་སྒོ་ནས་བསྟོད་པ་

Following an ode to his reincarnation as Tilopa,[9] come the following excerpts from Mgur I-5 that link Chos pa Rin po che not only with Mi la ras pa, but with several masters of the early part of the Bka' brgyud pa lineage:

གནས་གངས་ཁྲོད་འགྲིམས་ཤིང་གཏུམ་མོ་བསྒོམས། །
ལམ་ཕྱག་ཆེན་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ཟུང་འཇུག་བརྙེས། །
རྗེ་མི་ལ་བཞད་པའི་རྡོ་རྗེ་ལ། །
བདག་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་སོ་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །

རླུང་དབུ་མར་[10]ཞུགས་ཤིང་བདེ་སྟོང་འབར། །
སྒྱུ་སྐྱེ་འཆི་སྦྱངས་པས་[11]འཇའ་ལུས་བརྙེས། །
རྗེ་ཐུགས་སྲས་རས་པ་ཞི་བ་འོད། །
བདག་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་སོ་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །

[7] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, Mgur X-11, 226/ 199.
[8] Rong bo was the place where Chos pa Rin po che was born.
[9] Tilopa had synthesized what were to become some of the principle Bka' brgyud pa practices. Tsong kha pa received those transmissions from Tilopa as well, and made them a Dge lugs pa teaching. I will discuss these practices in Chapter 4.
[10] *mar* AB; *ma* CD.
[11] *pas* CD; *pa'i* AB.

ནང་ཐུགས་སྟོབས་ཆེ་བས་དཀའ་བ་སྤྱད། །
ཕྱི་རྐྱེན་ངན་གྲོགས་ཤར་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཐོབ། །
རྗེ་གྲུབ་ཆེན་རྒྱལ་བ་ལོ་རས་ལ། །
བདག་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་སོ་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །[12]

[He] wandered in snowy solitary places and meditated on *gtum mo*.
[He] obtained meditative integration through the power of the *Mahāmudrā* path.
I beseech Lord Mi la Bzhad pa'i rdo rje.[13]
Please bless [me].

[He] inserted [his] *rlung* into the middle [channel] and burned with blissful heat.
Because [he] renounced birth and death, [he] obtained a rainbow body.
I beseech the lord, the spiritual son Ras pa Zhi ba 'od.
Please bless [me].

Internally, with great strength [he] did the difficult practices.
Externally, unfortunate accidents arose as friends [and he] obtained *siddhi*s.
I beseech the lord, the siddha Rgyal ba Lo ras.
Please bless [me].

Zhi ba 'od was a direct disciple of Mi la ras pa.[14] Lo ras, the founder of the lower 'Brug pa school, was a spiritual descendant of Mi la ras pa.[15] It is interesting that three incarnations in a row are attributed to Mi la ras pa and those who followed him.[16]

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[12] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 11/ 10.

[13] Bzhad pa'i rdo rje is an epithet of Mi la ras pa.

[14] For Zhi ba 'od's story, see Chang, trans., *Hundred Thousand Songs*, vol. 1, 159-89.

[15] For Lo ras' story and translations of some of his songs, see Nālandā Translation Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa, trans., *The Rain of Wisdom: The Essence of the Ocean of True Meaning: The Vajra Songs of the Kagyü Gurus* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), 246-55, 332.

[16] The entire list of the eight incarnations, stemming from 'Jam dpal dbyangs and leading up to Chos pa Rin po che, is as follows: 'Jam dpal bshes gnyen, Tilopa, Rnal 'byor Chags pa khri mchog, Mi la ras pa, Ras pa Zhi ba 'od (b. 11th cent.), Grub chen Lo ras (d. 1250), Rgod tshang Mgon po rdo rje (1189–1258), and Zhang zhung Chos dbang grags pa (1404–1469), followed by Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (Chos pa Rin po che). See Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 10-11/ 9-11.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho goes to great lengths in what is one of the longest colophons of his *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* to document the relationship between Chos pa Rin po che and Mi la ras pa:

> དུས་གསུམ་མཁྱེན་པའི་བླ་མ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོའི་སྤྲུལ་པ་རྒྱལ་སྲས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་འཛིན་གྱི་གསུང་ནས་བདག་[17]ལ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་བླ་མ་[18]ཆོས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ཁོང་གི་ཨ་ཁུ་མདོན་ཞེས་ཐོགས་མེད་དུ་མངའ་བ་ཞུག་ཇོར་གྱི་གྲུབ་ཐོབ་ཆོས་རྗེ་སྐར་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་དགེ་ལྡན་གྱི་བྱང་རྩེ་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་གྲྭ་རྒྱུན་རྒྱུད་སྨད་པའི་ཆོས་གྲྭ་འཁྱིམས་པ་ཞིག་[19]ད་ལྟ་ཨ་མདོ་ན་སྒྲུབ་པ་བྱེད་ཀྱིན་ཡོད་པ་རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལའི་སྐུ་སྐྱེ་ཡིན་ངེས་ཤེས་པ་ཡོད་གསུངས་[20]པ་དང་མཐུན་པར་གྲུབ་ཆེན་ཆོས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལ་རས་པར་ཁྲ་ལམ་གྱིས་ཤར་བྱུང་གསུངས་[21]། གཞན་ཡང་རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལར་སྐུའི་སྐྱེ་བ་བཞིས་ཚུལ་དང་། རས་པ་ཞི་བ་འོད་དུ་སྐུའི་སྐྱེ་བ་བཞིས་ཚུལ་དང་ལོ་རས་སུ་སྐུའི་སྐྱེ་བ་བཞིས་ཚུལ་ཡང་མང་པོ་ཞིག་ལ་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་གསུང་བ་གནང་།[22]

> The lama who knows the three times, incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, Rgyal sras Rin po che Blo bzang bstan 'dzin,[23] said to me, "In accordance with what [my (Rgyal sras')] lama, ...Chos rje skar rgyal said, [he] knows with certainty that your lama, Chos pa Rin po che, one who went around the religious school of Rgyud smad in Byang rtse of Dga' ldan, now in Amdo doing practices, is a reincarnation of Mi la ras pa." In agreement with [what Rgyal sras' lama had said to Rgyal sras, Rgyal sras

[17] *bdag* ABC; *bkhrug* D.
[18] *bla ma* ABC; *bla tsa* D.
[19] *zhig* BCD; *cig* A.
[20] *gsungs* A; *gsung* BCD.
[21] *gsungs* AB; *gsung* CD.
[22] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 12/ 10-11.
[23] The following is from the biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho about the first teachings he received from Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan 'dzin shortly after Skal ldan rgya mtsho returned from Dbus:

> རྒྱལ་སྲས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་འཛིན་གྱི་ཞབས་དྲུང་ནས་ཚེ་རྟ་མགོན་གསུམ་སོགས་རྗེས་གནང་དུ་མ་དང་། ལམ་རིམ་ཕྱག་ཆེན་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་སྦྱོང་སོགས་མང་དུ་གསན།

> From Rgyal sras rin po che Blo bzang bstan 'dzin, [he] heard many tantric rituals of the three, Tshe [dpag med], Rta [mgrin], Mgon [po], and so on; and many things such as the study of [the genres of] *lam rim*, *phyag chen*, and *byang chub sems*.

For this, see Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 17.

said to me,] "The siddha Chos pa Rin po che has appeared in vivid color as lord Mi la ras pa." Moreover, [he] said a lot in extensive detail about the manner in which [Chos pa Rin po che] took birth as Lord Mi la and the manner in which [he] took birth as Ras pa Zhi ba 'od and also the manner in which [he] took birth as Lo ras.

In Mgur X-19, Skal ldan rgya mtsho sings of hearing about Chos pa Rin po che's lineage from Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan 'dzin:

....
མགོན་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་འཛིན་ཞབས་ལ་འདུད། །

ཕ་དུས་གསུམ་མཁྱེན་དེའི་བཀའ་དྲིན་ལས། །
དྲིན་བསབ་དཀའ་ཆོས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི། །
སྐུའི་[24] སྐྱེ་བ་བརྒྱུད་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་ཐོས། །[25]

....
[I] bow to Protector Blo bzang bstan 'dzin.

Through the kindness of that father, who knows the three times,
[I] heard the story of the reincarnational lineage
Of Chos pa Rin po che, whose kindness has been difficult to repay.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho again sings of Rgyal sras' words regarding Chos pa Rin po che as definitely being Mi la ras pa's incarnation in Mgur X-11:

གནས་རོང་བོའི་[26] ཆོས་སྡེར་བཞུགས་པའི་ཚེ། །

....

གང་ལྟར་ཡང་གྲུབ་ཆེན་ཆོས་པ་དེ། །
རྗེ་མི་ལའི་སྤྲུལ་པ་ངེས་ངེས་ཡིན། །

དེར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མི་དགོས་ཡང་ཡང་གསུངས། །[27]

[24] *sku'i* ABC; *sku* D.
[25] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 241/ 212.
[26] *po'i* BCD; *por* A.
[27] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 227/ 200.

> When [Rgyal sras] was staying at the religious college of Rong bo, [he] said,
>
> ....
>
> "In any case, it is absolutely certain that
> The siddha Chos pa [Rin po che] is the incarnation of Mi la ras pa.
>
> With regard to that, [I] am not obliged to doubt." [He] said [this] over and over.

Considering that the Karma pas and Dge lugs pas had been at war with each other for centuries, it is not surprising that Skal ldan rgya mtsho goes to such lengths, and even cites the authority of another revered lama, to legitimize Chos pa Rin po che as an incarnation of Mi la ras pa.

The notion that Chos pa Rin po che had a relationship with Mi la ras pa was not merely abstract, as the following stories will show. Chos pa Rin po che was influenced by Mi la ras pa from a young age. This excerpt from the biography that Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote of Chos pa Rin po che gives an account of a dream Chos pa Rin po che had of the lord:

> དགུང་ལོ་བཅུ་བཞི་བཞེས་པའི་ཤིང་རྟ་ལ། །
> གོང་མ་ཆོས་རྗེ་རིན་ཆེན་བསམ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱིས། །
> རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་[28] ཞིང་དེ་ནས་ད་བར་དུ། །
> ཁས་བླངས་བསླབ་སྡོམ་མིག་འབྲས་ལྟ་བུར་བསྲུངས། །
>
> ....
>
> རབ་བྱུང་བསྒྲུབས་པའི་ལོ་དེར་རྗེ་བཙུན་གྱི། །
> རྣམ་ཐར་མགུར་འབུམ་ཞིབ་ཏུ་གཟིགས་པའི་ཚེ། །
> ལན་ཅིག་མནལ་དུ་སོང་བའི་རྨི་ལམ་དུ། །
> ཟླ་བའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དཀར་ཞིང་མཛེས་པ་ལ། །
> རྒྱབ་ཡོལ་འོད་ཀོར་མཛད་པའི་རྗེ་བཙུན་ཞིག །
> ཕྱག་གཡས་སྙན་དང་འགྲམ་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་ཅིང་། །

[28] Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 2a.3: *byung*; Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1999), 101: *phyung*.

ཕྱག་གཡོན་ཐོད་ཕོར་བསྣམས་ནས་མགུར་དབྱངས་ནི། །
ལྷང་ལྷང་འཁྲིན་པའི་གཟིགས་སྣང་གསལ་བར་བྱུང་། །[29]

When [Chos pa Rin po che] reached the age of fourteen in 1594,
[He] was ordained by the superior one,
The lord of religion, Rin chen bsam 'grub,
And from then on until now, he has guarded [his] promises and vows like an eyeball.

....

When [he] was looking in detail at the biography [and] *Mgur 'bum* of the lord
In the year in which [he] completed [his] ordination,
Once when [he] was falling asleep, in a dream [he saw]
A lord on a white and beautiful circle of a moon
Who was creating a backdrop of a halo with lights radiating out,
[His] right hand supporting [his] ear and cheek,
[His] left hand holding a drinking cup made of a skull,
And a vision of the way [he] was singing a *mgur* appeared clearly [to Chos pa Rin po che].

What the lord was doing in young Chos pa Rin po che's dream, what he was holding, his hand gesture to his ear, and the fact that he was singing *mgur* make it clear that the lord was Mi la ras pa.

Perhaps the most striking experience that shows the strong connection between Chos pa Rin po che and Mi la ras pa came at the time of the former's death. In the first month of 1659, Chos pa Rin po che, now age 79, showed signs of illness, and Skal ldan rgya mtsho and other mountain hermits went to him.[30] Chos pa Rin po che said to them,

ཞལ་ནས་ཁོ་བོ་ཆེ་སྒྲུབ་ལ་ནན་ཏན་ཆེ་བས། ལུས་སྲོག་ད་བར་དུ་མ་བྲལ། ད་ཤི་ན་བཟང་འདུག་བྱ་བ་དང་.......[31]

[29] Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 2a.2-2b.2.
[30] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 22.
[31] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 39.

ཡང་ཁོ་བོ་ལ་ན་ཟུག་ཕྲན་བུ་སྣང་ཡང་སྔོན་གྱི་ལས་ངན་སྦྱོང་ཐབས་ཡིན། ན་བ་དང་
འཆི་བ་འདི་ལ་འགྱོད་པ་རྡུལ་ཙམ་ཡང་མེད་དགའ་དགའ་རང་ཡིན་བྱ་བ་དང་....[32]

Because of great exertion regarding life and spiritual realization, I have not separated from my body up until now. If [I] die now, [it] would be good............

Moreover, although a little illness has appeared in me, it is a means to study bad karma of previous times. There is no regretting even one particle regarding this illness and death. [They] are joy itself.........

A few days after, he had a healthy constitution, though “the movement [of] the wind of [his] nose was not changing.”[33] Skal ldan rgya mtsho describes what happened next in his biography of Chos pa Rin po che:

སྐབས་དེར་སྐུ་བསྙུངས་སྐྱིལ་ཀྲུང་ངང་ནས་བཞུགས། །

དེ་ནས་ཅུང་ཟད་སོང་ཚེ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི[34]། །
མྱ་ངན་འདའ་ཚུལ་བསྟན་ལྟར་ཅུང་ཟད་བཞུགས། །

དེ་ནས་སླར་བཞེངས་རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལ་ལྟར། །
སྐུ་ལུས་འགྱིང་ཞིང་སྐྱིལ་ཀྲུང་ཕྱེད་པ་མཛད། །
ཕྱག་གཡས་ཕྲག་པ་གཡས་སྟེང་ཅུང་ཟད་ཕྱར[35]། །
ཕྱག་གཡོན་ལྟེ་འོག་མཉམ་བཞག་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་མཛད། །

སྐུ་ནི་འགྱུར་བ་མེད་པར་བཞུགས་པའི་ངང་། །
འཕོ་བའི་དམིགས་ཁྲིད་ཟབ་མོ་སྦྱོང[36]བཞིན་དུ། །
མྱ་ངན་འདས་ཚེ་མི་རྟོག་ཆར་ཡང་བབས། །

[32] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 39.
[33] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 42.
[34] Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 15b.1: *kyi*; Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 43: *kyis*.
[35] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 43: *phyar*; Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 15b.1: *'phyar*.
[36] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 43: *sbyong*; Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 15b.2: *skyong*.

ཉི་མའི་འོད་གསལ་འཇའ་ཚོན་བླ་བྲེ་[37] བྲེས། །
ནམ་མཁའ་གཡའ་དག་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་དྲི་ངད་ལྡང[38]། །
ཞལ་རས་མདངས་གསལ་སྐུ་དྲོད་མི་ཉམས་སོགས། །
ངོ་མཚར་རྟགས་བསྟན་ཐམས་ཅད་དད་གུས་འཕེལ། །

དེ་ཚེ་རླངས་པའི་བསིལ་བ་ལས་འོངས་པའི། །
རིང་བསྲེལ་བྱུང་ཞེས་མང་པོའི་ངག་ལས་ཐོས། །[39]

On that occasion, [he] remained sitting upright, cross-legged.

Then, after a little while, [he] remained for a brief time as if showing
The Buddha's way of passing beyond suffering.

Then again [he] got up. Like Lord Mi la ras pa,
[He] took on a striking posture and sat in the cross-legged position.
[His] right hand on his right shoulder [palm upwards, he] raised [the hand] a little.
[His] left hand below the navel, [he] did a *mudrā* [of] meditative equipoise.

He was practicing the special kind of instruction for transference.
While in [this] state [his] body remained seated without any change [and]
When [he] passed beyond suffering, a rain of flowers also fell.

The clear sunlight stretched out a canopy of rainbows.
The fragrance of moral purity rose [into] the clear sky.
[His] face [had] a healthy complexion, [his] body warmth [had] not deteriorated, and so on.
[He] showed such wondrous signs as these [and] everyone [present] increased in faith and respect.

Then coming through the coolness of the mists
[One] heard much talk that relics had occurred.

[37] Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 15b.2: *bre*; Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 43: *re*.
[38] Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 15b.3: *ldang*; Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 43: *ldan*. Against both readings, I prefer *ldangs*, the pf. stem.
[39] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 43; Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 15a.6-15b.4.

That Chos pa Rin po che adopted Mi la ras pa's posture just as he was passing beyond suffering indicates that Chos pa Rin po che had a very deep connection with Mi la ras pa.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Relationship to Mi la ras pa

Skal ldan rgya mtsho also had a strong relation with Mi la ras pa, in part because of the influence of his older brother and teacher. The following excerpt from Mgur X-10 shows that he associated Mi la ras pa, Chos pa Rin po che and mountain hermitages:

སྔོན་མི་ལ་རས་པ་ཐོས་པ་དགའ། །
སྐབས་འདི་རུ་བདག་གི་དཔལ་དང་མགོན། །
རྗེ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ལ། །
མིག་ཡར་བལྟས་རི་ཁྲོད་འཛིན་སྙམ་ཤར། །[40]

[I] looked up to the former Mi la ras pa, Thos pa dga',[41]
In the present my glory and protector,
Lord Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.
The thought occurred [to me] to hold fast to a mountain hermitage.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho felt inspired to go to the mountains when he thought of Mi la ras pa and his older brother.

In Mgur VII-3, Skal ldan rgya mtsho expresses sadness that people in his time are not following the example of Mi la ras pa, in terms of living in solitude:

རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལ་རས་པས། །
དབེན་གནས་ཁོ་ན་བསྔགས་ཀྱང་། །
རྗེས་སུ་འབྲང་མཁན་མེད་པའི། །
ཚུལ་འདིས་སྣང་བ་སྐྱོ་བ། །[42]

Although lord Mi la ras pa
Praised only solitary places,

[40] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 224/ 198.
[41] *Thos pa dga'* is Mi la ras pa's childhood name.
[42] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 139-40/ 124.

Because of this situation in which
There are no people following in [his] tracks—Oh sorrow!

Skal ldan rgya mtsho not only associated Mi la ras pa with mountain hermitages, but also with renunciation and practice. The following excerpt from Mgur III-4, already cited in Chapter 2, bears repeating here:

སྔར་བླ་མ་གྲྭ་པ་ཡོན་བདག་ལ། །
ཚེ་བློས་གཏོང་སྒྲུབ་པ་ལྷུར་ལེན་ཞེས། །
ཚིག་མང་གཏམ་[43] དམ་བཅའ་མང་ཕུལ་ཡང་། །
དུས་ད་དུང་ཚེ་འདི་བློས་མ་ཐོང་[44]། །

སྔོན་རི་ཁྲོད་མ་བསྟེན་གནས་སྐབས་སུ། །
དུས་ནམ་ཞིག་སྒྲུབ་པ་བྱེད་པའི་ཚེ། །
རྗེ་མི་ལ་ལྷ་བུར་བྱེད་སྙམ་ཡང་། །
ད་སྒྲུབ་ལ་ཞུགས་ཚེ་རེ་མ་བྱུང་། །

རྗེ་མི་ལ་ལྷ་བུ་ཕར་ལ་ཞོག །

དུས་ད་ལྟའི་སྒོམ་ཆེན་ཐ་མ་ལའང་། །
མིག་ཡར་བལྟས་འགྲན་པར་མི་བཟོད་ན། །
ཉམས་རྟོགས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ག་ལ་སྐྱེ། །[45]

Previously although [I] gave many words and many promises
To lamas, monks [and] patrons,
Saying, "[I] earnestly apply [myself] to renouncing [this] life [and its concerns],"
Until now [I] have not renounced this life completely.

Previously in a period in which [I] was not relying on mountain hermitages,
Whenever [I] did practices,
Although [I] thought to do them in the manner of Mi la ras pa,
When [I] entered into practices then, [my] hopes were not realized.

[43] *gtam* AD; *gtams* BC.
[44] Instead, I have read *btang* here.
[45] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 38/ 34-5.

Put away [the idea of practicing] like Mi la ras pa!

As for today's common siddhas having set [their] aims high,
If even [they] cannot take the competition,[46]
Where will the quality of experiential knowledge arise?

Skal ldan rgya mtsho had attempted to do his practices as he thought Mi la ras pa would have done them, but without renunciation and because he was not in a solitary place, his practices did not bear fruit. Especially in this age of decline, he thought it necessary to have all things working together. Skal ldan rgya mtsho continues,

ས་དབེན་ཞིང་ཉམས་དགར་མི་འགྲོ་ན། །
མིང་རས་པར་བཏགས་པས་ཅི་ལ་ཕན། །[47]

If [I] don't go to a solitary and pleasing place,
What good would it do calling [myself] "*ras pa*"?

The designation, *ras pa*, "one who wears cotton," was used not only by Mi la ras pa but also a number of his followers, and indicated renunciation in general, and the lack of need for warm clothes in particular (since they performed *gtum mo*). Skal ldan ras pa was a name that Skal ldan rgya mtsho frequently used for himself. This did not mean that he specifically wore only thin cotton, since as a monk, he was known to wear monks' robes. But by the use of this name he indicated whatever renunciations the name implied to him, as well as demonstrated the relationship he felt with Mi la ras pa. He signed the name Skal ldan ras pa in the colophons to no fewer than nine *mgur*.[48] In the excerpt above, he makes clear the importance he places on living up to the level of renunciation the name implies for him. Below is an excerpt from Mgur VII-11, that I also quoted in Chapter 2, in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho makes clear his joy at wearing clothes of renunciation:

[46] I.e. cannot bear the comparison [with Mi la ras pa].
[47] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 38/ 34-5.
[48] The name Skal ldan ras pa appears in the colophons to Mgur III-1, III-14, IV-4, IV-10, IV-11, VII-3, VII-11, and the internal colophons to Mgur III-1 and IX-7. The texts of five of these have to do with advice he is giving to himself.

ཕུག་དེ་ན་སྐལ་ལྡན་རས་པ་ང། །
ལུས་དུར་སྨྲིག་གོས་ཀྱིས་གཡོགས་པས་བདེ། །[49]

In that cave, because I, Skal ldan ras pa,
Have covered [my] body with maroon,[50] [I] am happy.

Covering his body with maroon was one of the eighteen actions to which he attributes happiness, that he sang of at the lovely solitary retreat at Se ku.

Despite their differences, the lives Chos pa Rin po che and Skal ldan rgya mtsho led were often similar to the way Mi la ras pa is said to have lived according to the versions of his biography and the collection of his songs that the brothers would have been familiar with. They both concluded that a focus on renunciation and practice in hermitages was necessary, in order to integrate the teachings they received. They both felt great joy in living the life of a renunciant. Skal ldan rgya mtsho sang *mgur* as a means to instruct himself and his disciple mountain hermits. Over the centuries, like Mi la ras pa, he has usually been depicted in statues and paintings singing *mgur*, his right hand to his ear. However, instead of holding a skull cup, his left hand holds his *Mgur 'bum*.

49 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 153/ 136.
50 Maroon is the color of a monk's robe in Tibet.

CHAPTER FOUR

INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DGA' LDAN ORAL TRADITION OF *MAHĀMUDRĀ*

> གཉུག་མ་འོད་གསལ་གཤིས་ལ། །
> བཟང་ངན་སྐྱོས་པ་མེད་དོ། །
> ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི། །[1]

> As for the natural disposition of primordial, clear light,
> There is no generation of good and bad.
> A li lo mo a li.

In this verse, Skal ldan rgya mtsho sings about *Mahāmudrā* (*phyag rgya chen po*). I will first give a brief explanation of what *Mahāmudrā* is and a history of the traditions of its practice before describing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's relations with it. The term *Mahāmudrā* can refer to both a set of meditative practices and the supreme goal of those practices.[2] As the goal of the practice, it is a direct experience of the mind that is both radiant and beyond conceptualization and expression. The fourteenth Dalai Lama describes it as a "primordial clear light mind," having no beginning or end.[3] J. D. Willis defines *Mahāmudrā* as "naturalness of the innate mind, freed of all self-originated superimpositions onto the real, wherein distinctions of subject and object are completely dissolved and transcended and reality as a whole is experienced directly, as it really is."[4]

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[1] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, VIII-26, 194/ 171. This *mgur* is translated in full in the appendix, and is discussed extensively later in my chapter on indigenous Tibetan poetic figures.

[2] The word *mahāmudrā* literally means great seal/ gesture/ symbol. See Janice D. Willis, *Enlightened Beings: Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 111. (Henceforth referred to as Willis, *Enlightened Beings*.)

[3] Tenzin Gyatso, H. H. the Dalai Lama & Alexander Berzin, *The Gelug/ Kagyü Tradition of Mahāmudrā* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1997), 89. *Mahāmudrā* has frequently been compared to *Rdzogs chen* and the Sudden Enlightenment of *Chan*, or *Zen*.

[4] Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 111.

Mahāmudrā as a tradition of practices and as the goal of those practices goes back at least as far as some of the eighty-four *mahāsiddha*s of India. Tilopa synthesized practices he received from four other *mahāsiddhas*[5] and wrote the earliest known text on yoga methods of *Mahāmudrā* later referred to as the "six yogas."[6] Nāropa subsequently studied them with Tilopa and wrote a more detailed set of instructions of his own.[7] Mar pa was the first to bring the tradition of the six yogas to Tibet, in the middle of the eleventh century.[8] He was a forefather of the Bka' brgyud sect, so from the time of its inception in Tibet, *Mahāmudrā* was a practice principally done by Bka' brgyud pas. There was little more written on the six yogas in Tibet over the next three centuries, perhaps because Nāropa himself had requested that the teachings remain secret for thirteen generations.[9]

Tsong kha pa happened to be in the fourteenth generation of a line that received the transmissions,[10] and was the first to write anew about the techniques. He studied with masters of many lineages, including Bka' brgyud, and it is said that he received an (ethereal) text, known as the *Sprul pa'i glegs bam chen mo* (*Miraculous Volume*), of detailed practice instructions on *Mahāmudrā* from bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.[11] Based on the teachings Tsong kha pa received from teachers in the flesh and otherwise, he systematized

[5] These were Kṛṣṇācārya, Nāgārjuna, Lawapa and Sukhasiddhi. See Glenn H. Mullin, ed., trans., *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1997), 25.

[6] *Śatadharma* [sic] *upadeśa nāma* (*Chos drug gi man ngag*, *The Oral Instruction of the Six Yogas*), translated by Mullin in *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 27-29.

[7] *Karṇatantra vajrapāda* (*Snyan rgyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang, Vajra Verses of the Whispered Tradition*), translated by Mullin in *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa.*, 35-41. Mullin believes that the terms the "six yogas" and the "six yogas of Nāropa" (*Nā ro'i chos drug*) were popularized after the tradition took hold in Tibet, probably by Mi la ras pa's disciple, Sgam po pa. See Mullin, ed., trans., *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 20.

[8] Mullin, ed., trans., *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 17.

[9] Mullin, ed., trans., *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 18.

[10] The transmission from Mar pa to Tsong kha pa went through Mi la ras pa and other Bka' brgyud pas, 'Bri gung pas and Zhwa lu pas (including Bu ston). According to this transmission, the six yogas are "inner heat yoga, illusory body yoga, clear light yoga, the yoga for the transference of consciousness to a higher realm, the yoga for transference of consciousness into another body, and the *bar do* yoga." Mullin, ed., trans., *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 14, 18-19.

[11] Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 123.

what became a tradition of tantric practices that he considered essential for enlightenment in one life[12] known as the Dga' ldan Oral Tradition of *Mahāmudrā* (*Dga' ldan snyan brgyud* or *Dge ldan bka' brgyud*)[13] and wrote two yoga methods for practicing the six yogas.[14]

While the tradition of *Mahāmudrā* continued to be associated especially with the Bka' brgyud pa sect, there were at the same time some members of the Dge lugs pa school who also practiced it. The lineage of the Dga' ldan Oral Tradition and the passage of the *Miraculous Volume* descended from Mañjuśrī and Tsong kha pa through five other Dge lugs pa siddhas[15] to Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, the first Paṇ chen Lama, who wrote further commentaries on the subject.[16] While these siddhas had also studied the Dge lugs pa

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[12] Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 123.

[13] This tradition combines practices related to three chief deities: Guhyasamāja (Gsang 'dus), Cakrasaṃvara (Bde mchog) and Vajrabhairava ('Jigs byed). It is only one of the two oral traditions that the Dge lugs pas recognize, the other one being *gcod*. See Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, xiv-xv, 170.

For general information on the Dga' ldan Oral Tradition of *Mahāmudrā* (*Dge ldan bka' brgyud phyag chen*) see Willis, *Enlightened Beings*; H.H. The Dalai Lama & Alexander Berzin, *The Gelug/ Kagyü Tradition of Mahāmudrā*; and Mullin, ed., trans., *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*. For a further bibliography on the six yogas, see Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 144 n. 41.

[14] Both of these texts have been translated into English. See Tsong kha pa, *A Book of Three Inspirations: A Treatise of the Stages of Training in the Profound Path of Nāro's Six Dharmas* (*Zab lam nā ro'i chos drug gi sgo nas 'khrid pa'i rim pa yid ches gsum ldan*), ed., trans. Glenn H. Mullin in *Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Nāropa* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1996); and Tsong kha pa, *A Practice Manual on the Six Yogas of Nāropa: Taking the Practice in Hand* (*Nā ro'i chos drug gi dmigs skor lag tu len tshul*), ed., trans. Mullin in *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*.

[15] These are Rtogs ldan 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho (1356–1428), Ba so Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1402–1473), Chos kyi rdo rje, Rgyal ba Dben sa pa (1505–1566), and Mkhas grub Sangs rgyas ye shes (1525–1591). Willis has translated biographies of these and parts of a biography of the Paṇ chen Lama in *Enlightened Beings*, 33-96. For further lineage holders, see "Praises and Supplication to the Gelukpa *Mahāmudrā* Lineage" in Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 101-10.

[16] The Paṇ chen Lama wrote *Nā ro'i chos drug gi zab 'khrid gser gyi sde mig* (*The Golden Key: A Profound Guide to the Six Yogas of Nāropa*), translated by Mullin in *Readings on the Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 141-53; and *Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtsa ba rgyal ba'i gzhung lam* (*A Root Text for the Precious Gelug/ Kagyü Tradition of Mahāmudrā: The Main Road of the Triumphant Ones*), trans. Alexander Berzin in *The Gelug/ Kagyü Tradition of Mahāmudrā*, along with a commentary by H. H. the Dalai Lama on the text's autocommentary, *Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtsa ba rgyal ba'i gzhung lam yang gsal sgron me* (*An Extensive Explanation of "A Root Text for the Gelug/ Kagyü Lineage of Mahāmudrā": A Lamp for Further Illumination*). Further references to Paṇ chen Blo

standard curriculum, they were nonsectarian with respect to teachers, studied texts such as the *Six Yogas of Nāropa* and meditated for long periods of time in hermitages.[17] It is significant that though these siddhas studied in Lhasa, most of them had their main seats away from the locus of their scholarship,[18] presumably to feel the freedom they needed to pursue their practices. Though the Dge lugs pa school is usually thought to be made up of scholars, this lineage attests to the fact that there also are scholar-siddhas.

There are many parallels between the lifestyles of these siddhas and that of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. As we have seen, he studied the Dge lugs pa standard curriculum vigorously in the Lhasa area and was highly instrumental in the spread of the Dge lugs pa school in Amdo, yet he also had nonsectarian views that he expressed in his writing and way of life. Moreover, he chose to be a hermit so as to best support his spiritual development. Now that I have summarized some of what has been written about *Mahāmudrā* by other scholars, let us examine Skal ldan rgya mtsho's involvement with it.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's interest in *Mahāmudrā* seems to have gone hand in hand with interest in Mi la ras pa. Let us look again at one of Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan 'dzin's statements about the relationship between Chos pa Rin po che and Mi la ras pa. I have expanded my citation here to include Rgyal sras' advice to Skal ldan rgya mtsho. This excerpt is from Mgur X-11:

རྗེ་དུས་གསུམ་མཁྱེན་པ་སྤྲུལ་བའི་སྐུ། །
དཔལ་རྒྱལ་སྲས་ཆེན་པོའི་གསུང་སྒྲོས་ལས། །
སྟོན་གྱི་མི་ལ་རས་པ་དེ། །
ད་ལྟ་རོང་བོའི་ཆོས་པར་སྣང་། །

དེ་ཁོང་གི་ཨ་ཁུས་ལུང་བསྟན་བཞིན། །
མི་ང་ཡང་ལྷག་པར་ཡིད་ཆེས་རྙེད། །

bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan's involvement with *Mahāmudrā* can be found in a biography of him, partially translated by Willis in *Enlightened Beings*, 85-96.

[17] Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 13-14.

[18] Most of them had their seats in Gtsang. Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 10.

བུ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱང་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མ་བྱེད་པར། །
རྗེ་གྲུབ་ཆེན་གསུངས་བཞིན་སྒྲུབས་ཤིག་གསུངས། །[19]

According to the statement of the great glorious Rgyal sras,
Lord, the incarnation of the one who is omniscient about the
three times,
The former Mi la ras pa has now appeared
As a religious practitioner at Rong bo.

According to the prophesy by his teacher,[20]
I also would obtain greater belief.

"Son, you [Skal ldan rgya mtsho] also, without causing a doubt
Must practice in accordance with what the lord siddha [Mi la
ras pa] said," [he] said.

Rgyal sras's advice to Skal ldan rgya mtsho to practice like Mi la ras pa is especially interesting since it was Rgyal sras himself who gave Skal ldan rgya mtsho teachings for the study of *Mahāmudrā*.[21] This was shortly after the latter's return to Amdo at the age of twenty-one;[22] later, Rgyal sras gave Skal ldan rgya mtsho further encouragement to give the teachings to the mountain hermits of Bkra shis 'khyil.[23]

Though Rgyal sras' advice to Skal ldan rgya mtsho was to practice like Mi la ras pa and both Rgyal sras and Skal ldan rgya mtsho associated *Mahāmudrā* with Mi la ras pa, they were at the same time members of the Dge lugs pa school. Surely Rgyal sras was in essence expecting Skal ldan rgya mtsho to practice like Mi la ras pa but via the Dge lugs pa form of *Mahāmudrā* (not Bka' brgyud pa's).

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19 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 226/ 199.

20 Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan 'dzin's teacher is identified in the colophon to Mgur I-5, 12/ 11 as Chos rje Skar rgyal. There it says that it was Chos rje Skar rgyal who gave Rgyal sras the information about Chos pa Rin po che's past lives.

21 Skal ldan rgya mtsho had also received teachings in the genre of *phyag chen* just shortly before that, from another lama teaching in Amdo, Dgon lung Chos rje 'Dan ma Grub chen pa Tshul khrims rgya mtsho. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 16.

22 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 17.

23 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 57. The teachings were given to the mountain hermits of Bkra shis 'khyil some time in the late 1670's. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 70.

Besides Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan 'dzin, there was another lama who played a central role in the lives of Skal ldan rgya mtsho and Chos pa Rin po che who was deeply involved in the instruction of *Mahāmudrā*, namely the first Paṇ chen Lama. His contributions were large since he wrote down concise directions for its practice, referred to earlier. We have already seen how important the Paṇ chen Lama was to Skal ldan rgya mtsho, since it was the Paṇ chen Lama who gave him full ordination in the Jo khang, the holiest temple in Lhasa. The Paṇ chen Lama also played a strong role in Chos pa Rin po che's life, giving him initiations and teachings over a long period.[24] Although neither Skal ldan rgya mtsho nor Chos pa Rin po che had occasion to receive the teachings of *Mahāmudrā* directly from the Paṇ chen Lama, they surely associated the teachings and practice of *Mahāmudrā* with him. Specifically, we know that Skal ldan rgya mtsho studied and cited the Paṇ chen Lama's instructions.[25]

There are four works in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Gsung 'bum*: about *Mahāmudrā*:

Kha-5: ཕྱག་ཆེན་བརྒྱུད་འདེབས་
A Petition to the Mahāmudrā Lineage[26]

[24] Chos pa Rin po che studied with the Paṇ chen Lama in Dbus in 1603, 1608 and 1617, and later sent gifts and correspondence to the lama from Amdo. In 1658, one year before Chos pa Rin po che's death, he supplicated the lama for further guidance, so that they might reunite in the same Buddha field in their next lives. See Skal ldan, *Chos pa'i rnam thar* (1987), 2b.3-6, 4a.3, 4a.5-6, 5a.1-2, 5b.5-6, and 20a.2-4.

[25] *Phyag rgya chen po'i 'khrid* (*instructions for Mahāmudrā*) is a description rather than a title, and refers to the aforementioned text of the Paṇ chen Lama, *Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtsa ba rgyal ba'i gzhung lam* (*A Root Text for the Precious Gelug/ Kagyü Tradition of Mahāmudrā: The Main Road of the Triumphant Ones*), and especially to the Paṇ chen Lama's autocommentary, *Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtsa ba rgyal ba'i gzhung lam yang gsal sgron me* (*An Extensive Explanation of* "*A Root Text for the Gelug/ Kagyü Lineage of Mahāmudrā*"*: A Lamp for Further Illumination*). We know that Skal ldan rgya mtsho read it, since he cites it as a source for *Zhi gnas kyi dmigs 'khrid* (*An instruction on how to focus on zhi gnas*), in Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), vol. Ga-14.

[26] Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), vol. Kha-5; and Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999), vol. 2, 211-13.

Kha-6: འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དགེ་ལྡན་ཕྱག་ཆེན་ཟབ་ཁྲིད་གདམས་ངག་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ནས་བཏུས་པ་
Quotations from Dge ldan phyag chen zab khrid gdams ngag rgya mtsho[27]

Kha-7: རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དགེ་ལྡན་བཀའ་བརྒྱུད་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཉམས་ཁྲིད་
རྗེ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་གིས་
བསྐུལ་བ་
An Experiential Manual of the Dge ldan Oral Tradition of Mahāmudrā[28]

Kha-8: ཕྱག་ཆེན་གྱི་འཁྲིད་ཡིག
An Instruction Manual of Mahāmudrā[29]

Text Kha-5, spoken by Chos pa Rin po che, substantiates the exact lineage of *Mahāmudrā* the brothers received instruction in. This work follows for the most part the traditional lineage of the Dge lugs pa Oral Tradition of *Mahāmudrā* in that it petitions 'Jam dpal dbyangs, Blo bzang grags pa (Tsong kha pa), Ba so Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, and so on, down through Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, the first Paṇ chen Lama and later Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan 'dzin.[30] Text Kha-6 was written down by one of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's disciples, and edited by Skal ldan rgya mtsho for the purpose of being delivered to an assemblage of monks. Text Kha-7 was written by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, at the instigation of Chos pa Rin po che. Text Kha-8, an instruction manual, also seems to be by Skal ldan rgya mtsho.[31] These works include both homages to the lineage and instructions for his own disciples, and show avid interest on Skal ldan rgya mtsho's part for the genre.

[27] Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), vol. Kha-6; and Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999), vol. 2, 214-35.
[28] Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), vol. Kha-7; and Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999), vol. 2, 236-53.
[29] Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), vol. Kha-8; and Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999), vol. 2, 254-65.
[30] *Phyag chen brgyud 'debs*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999), vol. 2, 212. I have compared Chos pa Rin po che's list to the list in Willis, *Enlightened Beings*, 99-110.
[31] I owe this suggestion to the Rong bo scholar Blo bzang chos grags, through personal conversation.

Now that we have examined the background to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's involvement with *Mahāmudrā* in terms of his lifestyle, his writings, the lineage of teachings he received and some of the associations he had with the practice, let us turn to what he himself says about it. In Mgur X-22 he tells us that he did become convinced that the practices suited him well, but only after he had tried them:

རྩ་རླུང་ཐིག་ལེ་སྒོམ་པའི་བྱ་བཏང་མིན་ཡང་།
བློ་ཁ་ཆོས་ལ་ཕྱོགས་པའི་བན་རྒན་ལགས་སོ།

གཏུམ་མོའི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་སྐྱེས་པའི་ཕྱག་ཆེན་སྒོམ་མཁན་མིན་ཡང་།
སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་ཞལ་ལྷ་འདོད་འདུན་པ་དྲག་པོ་མཆིས་པས།
བསམ་གཏན་ཁང་བུར་བླ་མ་ལྷ་ལ་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས།
གདམས་ངག་ཡང་ཡང་སེམས་སྙིང་བསྐོར་ནས་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་པའི་[32] བན་རྒན་
ལགས་[33] སོ།

ཕྱག་རྒྱ་གྲོགས་སུ་ཁྲིད་ནས་གསང་སྔགས་མྱུར་ལམ་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་པའི་བྱ་བཏང་
མིན་ཡང་།
དངོས་གྲུབ་རྩ་བ་དམ་ཚིག་སྡོམ་པ་གང་ནུས་ལེགས་པར་བསྲུངས་ནས།
ཐུན་དྲུག་ཐུན་བཞིའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་སྒོ་ནས་ཚོགས་གསོག་[34] སྒྲིབ་སྦྱོང་ལ་འབད་ཅིང་།
གསང་སྔགས་མྱུར་ལམ་བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་ཕྱོགས་ལ་དད་པ་བརྟན་པའི་བན་རྒན་ལགས་སོ།[35]

Although [I] was not a renunciant who meditates on *rtsa*, *rlung* and *thig le*,[36]
[I] was an old monk whose mind enters into the practice of religion.

[32] *pa'i* AB; *lo'i* CD.
[33] Since *lags* is the honorific of *yin/red*, and since Skal ldan rgya mtsho would not have referred to himself in the honorific, it seems that this form of the existential verb was added later by someone out of respect.
[34] *gsog* CD; *bsag* AB.
[35] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 245-46/ 216-17.
[36] *Rtsa*, *rlung* and *thig le* are usually translated as channels, wind and drops. The first of the six yogas of Nāropa, the generation of *gtum mo*, or inner heat, involves exercises with these three.

Although [I] was not one who meditates on *Mahāmudrā*, born through the power of *gtum mo*,
Because [I] had a strong desire to see the nature of the mind,[37]
Having petitioned lamas and deities in small meditation huts [and]
Having turned the oral instructions around in [my] mind again and again, [I now] am an old monk who practices [it].

Although [I] was not a renunciant who practices the quick path of mantras,
Having been led to *mudrā* friends [and]
Having guarded as well as possible the promises [and] vows, the foundation of the spiritual powers,
[I] strove for the attainment of virtue and the cleansing of obscurations in the manner of the yoga of the six [and] four sessions, and
[I] am [now] an old monk with firm faith in the areas of the quick mantra path, Perfection and Completion Stages.

The emphasis on his previously held skepticism gives more force to his expression of the faith he has acquired through experience, after practicing *Mahāmudrā* and *Vajrayāna*.

Explanations aside, Skal ldan rgya mtsho usually comes right out with strong affinity for the path. In the following introduction to Mgur V-19, he is as straightforward as can be about his practice, as he is about all other items he mentions here to define himself and his life. His life as a hermit, a renunciant and a singer of *mgur*; and his inward focus on the nature of mind complement one another:

[37] The generation of *gtum mo* forms a basis for the entire collection of yogas, which themselves are supporting practices for the realization of the nature of the mind, *Mahāmudrā*.

Tsong kha pa is clear about the relationship of the practice of the six yogas to the attainment of *Mahāmudrā*:

> In this tradition [i.e.the Six Yogas of Nāropa] the main technique is to arouse the inner heat at the navel chakra.....When these energies enter the central channel the four blisses are induced and one cultivated meditation on the basis of these in such a way as to give rise to the innate wisdom of *mahāmudrā*.

For this see Mullin, ed., trans., *Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 139.

བླ་མ་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་། །
ང་རང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ། །
ཉེ་གནས་བློ་བཟང་སྦྱིན་པ། །
སྡོད་ས་སྒྱིད་གསུམ་མཐོན་པོ། །
ཁ་ཟས་མེ་ཏོག་རིལ་བུ། །
གདམ་སྙན་[38] མགུར་དབྱངས་ལྷང་ལྷང་། །
བཟླས་བརྗོད་སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་ཚིག་གསུམ། །
སྦྱིན་གཏོང་ཤ་ཁྲིར་ཁྲག་ཁྲིར། །
ལྟ་ས་ནང་གི་སེམས་ཉིད། །
ལྟ་དུས་གཞོན་དུས་འདི་ཡིན། །[39]

Lama—Bstan 'dzin blo bzang,
I, myself—Skal ldan rgya mtsho
Disciple—Blo bzang sbyin pa
Dwelling place—the high Sgyed gsum,
Food—small balls of flowers,[40]
Speech that reaches the ear—[sung in] clear *mgur* melodies,
Recitations—the three phrases for going to refuge,
Gift giving—holding back neither flesh nor blood,
Locale of vision—the inner nature of mind,
Time of envisioning—is this time of youth.

The following excerpt from Mgur VIII-13 gives advice on how to observe one's emotions. The practice of seeing that one's emotions (and thoughts) have no inherent existence will lead to the attainment of the goal of *Mahāmudrā*, a direct seeing of the mind as both radiant and void:

རང་གི་ཉམས་ལ་ལྟོས་ཤིག །

གཅིག་དང་དུ་བྲལ་རིགས་པས། །
ཡོད་མེད་ལེགས་པར་དཔྱད་ཅེ། །

[38] *snyan* ABC; *rgyud* D.
[39] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 116-17/ 104.
[40] Eating flower balls is part of the *bcud len*/ *rasāyasa* practice.

ནམ་མཁའི་པདྨོ་ཇི་བཞིན། །
ཡེ་ནས་མེད་པར་འཆར་རོ། །

ཤར་བའི་ངང་དུ་སེམས་ཉིད། །
སྤྲོས་པ་ཀུན་དང་བྲལ་བར། །
གཡོ་མེད་རྩེ་གཅིག་ཞོག་དང་། །
མྱུར་དུ་ལྟ་བ་རྙེད་འགྱུར། །[41]

Look at [your] own emotions!

When [you] have examined well whether [they] exist
[independently] or not
Through the logic of whether they [are] single [entities] or
[can] be separated into however many [parts],
[They] will appear as totally absent,
Just as [there are no] lotuses in the sky.

Place [your] unwavering attention single-pointedly
On the nature of mind in [its] shining manner,
Having no generation whatsoever.
[You] will quickly obtain the view [of *Mahāmudrā*].

The following is an excerpt from Mgur XII-26, advice happily written for mountain hermits on the nature of mind. Its radiance is always within, but one must do practices in order to see it:

སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཉིད་མཐོང་ན། །
འཁོར་བའི་སྐྱེ་སྒོ་གཅོད་དོ། །

ཆོས་སྐུ་ནང་ནས་འཆར་གྱི། །
ཡང་ཡང་ཚོལ་[42] བར་གྱིས་དང་། །

གཉུག་མའི་ཟབ་མོ་སྣོང་ཉིད། །
ཀུན་ལ་ཁྱབ་པར་གནས་སོ། །

[41] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 181/ 160.
[42] *tshol* AB; *'tshol* CD.

གཟིགས་མོ་དེ་འདྲ་གཟིགས་ན། །
བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་རང་ཡིན་ནོ། །[43]

If [you] see the nature of mind,
[You] cut the doors to birth in samsara.

The *dharmakāya* shines within,
But [you must still] persist in seeking [it] out!

Deep, primordial emptiness
Abides pervasively in everything.

When [you] watch a show like that,
The mind itself is happy and glorious.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho used a variant of the last line over and over in two other songs of his. The degree to which he used it shows his strong affinity with realizing the nature of mind. In Mgur IV-8, said to himself in jest, it appears in the fourth line of every five-line stanza:

འོ་འོ་ཆོས་ཀུན་གདོད་མའི་གཞིས་ལུགས།
ཨའུ་མཐའ་བྲལ་ཆོས་དབྱིངས་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ནམ་མཁའ་ལྟ་བུར་སྒོམས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་ཐ་མལ་སྐྱེ་ཞི་བར་དོ། །
ཨའུ་སྐྱངས་འབྲས་སྐུ་གསུམ་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་སྐྱོང་བྱེད་བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་སྒོམས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་མདོ་སྔགས་ཆོས་ཀུན་བསྡུས་ན། །
ཨའུ་ཆོས་སྒོ་འདི་ཉིད་ཡིན་ཡ། །

[43] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 326-27/ 289.

ཕོ་རེ་རྒྱང་[44]གླུའི་ཚུལ་དུ་འཐེན་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །[45]

Oh yeah! The primordial empty nature of all *dharma*s
Hey you! is the limitless *dharmadhātu.* Hey!
Hey! Meditate [on it] like the sky!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The result of what has been purified
Hey you! of ordinary birth, death and *bar do* is the three *kāya*s. Hey!
Hey! Meditate on the Generation and Completion Stages, which are the purifying agents.
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! If [you] gather all the teachings of the sutras and tantras,
Hey you! this itself is the dance of religion.
Hey! Sing in the manner of a song from afar! Hey!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

In another *mgur*, the same line appears as the fourth line in every four-line stanza, with the same interjections as above. The following is an excerpt from Mgur VIII-24:

འོ་འོ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་ལྟ་བ། །
ཨའུ་གོ་བས་མི་ཆོག་སྒོམ་དགོས། །
ཕོ་རེ་ཆུ་བོའི་རྒྱུན་ལྟར་སྐྱོངས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །[46]

Oh yeah! The view of *Mahāmudrā* must be meditated upon.
Hey you! It's not enough to understand it!

[44] *rgyang* BCD; *rgyangs* A.
[45] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 78-79/ 70-71.
[46] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 193/ 170-71.

Hey! Guard it like the flow of a river!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?

The attainment of *Mahāmudrā* is experiential, not conceptual. Habitual tendencies may veer us away from our experiences of it, so we must guard the flow of experiences within us, as we would a precious river.

The most poignant statement about *Mahāmudrā* comes in Mgur X-9, a lovely song in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho beseeches Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan for help. It is translated in full in the appendix. In this excerpt from that song, Skal ldan rgya mtsho asks the first Paṇ chen Lama to come to him to aid him at the time of his death:

བློ་བཟང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ནི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
ལུས་སེམས་སོ་སོ་རུ་འབྲལ་བའི། །
མི་རྟག་འཆི་བ་དེ་བྱུང་ཚེ། །
ཆོས་མེད་བྱ་བྲལ་ངའི་[47] མདུན་དུ། །
འཇམ་དབྱངས་བླ་མ་ཁྱོད་བྱོན་ནས། །
རང་སེམས་འོད་ཀྱི་ནི་ཐིག་ལེ། །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྕགས་ཀྱུ་ནི་རྣོན་པོས། །
ཁྱོད་ཐུགས་བདེ་ཆེན་གྱི་ངང་དུ། །
དབྱེར་མེད་[48] བྱིན་གྱིས་ནི་རློབས་ཤིག །[49]

Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan,
When the time of transitory death has come
Which will separate [me] into a distinct body and a distinct mind,
You, lama, [who is like] Mañjughoṣa, having arrived
Before me, without religion [and] bereft of action,
Please bless [me] as inseparable from you in the manner of bliss
By breaking into the *thig le* of the light of [my] mind
[With your] iron hook of compassion.[50]

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[47] *nga'i* AB; *ba'i* CD.
[48] *med* CD; *med du* AB.
[49] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 224/ 197.
[50] This refers to the yoga for transference of consciousness to a higher realm, one of the six yogas, that is to be done when one is about to die. It involves both the visualization of one's guru as inseparable from one's meditational deity; and

That this is Skal ldan rgya mtsho's wish for the time of his death indicates that he knows that the first Paṇ chen Lama has the power to help him and that achieving *Mahāmudrā* is one of his greatest desires. Now that I have examined Skal ldan rgya mtsho's autobiographical and biographical *mgur* to see what they tell us about his life and his times, I will turn to Part II of this book, a general discussion of the genre of *mgur* and what Skal ldan rgya mtsho himself says about expressing himself through this medium.

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exercises that raise vital energies to the crown chakra, the gate through which consciousness will leave the body.

The metaphor, the iron hook of compassion, goes way back in Tibetan verse and is often used in a general sense, referring to the strength of compassion a teacher has for his student in leading him to enlightenment. But the combination of the two images here—the Paṇ chen Lama actually using his iron hook to open Skal ldan rgya mtsho's crown chakra so that the latter can achieve transference of consciousness to a higher realm before natural death has occurred—is stunning. See Mullin, ed., trans., *Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Nāropa*, 209-15.

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION TO SKAL LDAN RGYA MTSHO'S *MGUR 'BUM*

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GENRE OF *MGUR* AND WHAT IT MEANT TO SKAL LDAN RGYA MTSHO

Shar Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum*, as it is has been known since 1756, is a collection of two hundred and forty-two *mgur*, or religious songs, attributed to him. My aim in this chapter is to better understand what the genre of *mgur* meant to Skal ldan rgya mtsho. Let us begin by looking briefly at it within the context of all of his writing. Besides the *mgur* that were compiled in his *Mgur 'bum*, Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote fifty-nine other works, the vast majority of which are in prose. When carved onto woodblocks, these came to fill more than eight hundred folios. These works exist today in the first four volumes of a woodblock edition of his *Gsung 'bum*, or *Collected Writings*, mentioned above, and can also be read in their newly published version.[1] The subjects of these largely prose works can be summarized as follows: volume Ka contains a series of biographies, two histories of Buddhism in Amdo, and a cycle of eulogies; volume Kha contains basic *Madhyamaka* instructions and four works on *Mahāmudrā*; volume Ga contains cycles of guru yoga and instructions on the gradual path and meditation; and volume Nga contains practices in relation to such deities as Bde mchog, 'Jigs byed, Spyan ras gzigs, and Sgrol ma.

While the styles of the sixty works vary considerably and there are a variety of styles among the *mgur* as well, as a whole, Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* can be distinguished from his other works in the following ways: they are associated in particular with his life as a recluse; they are in verse and are intended to be sung; their expression is less formal and sometimes very personal; and they show considerable folk influence. Before going on to show directly what Skal ldan rgya mtsho said about singing and writing *mgur*, I will briefly summarize what Indologists and Tibetologists have written about the development of this genre. This will provide some background for Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* so that we can see that

[1] Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999).

it fits into a long tradition that went back to the songs of the *mahā-siddha*s in India and their development in Tibet.

The Development of the Genre of Mgur *up to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Time, in Brief*

Various authors have commented that what came to be called *mgur* in the *phyi dar*, or Later Period of the Diffusion of Buddhism, was highly influenced by the *vajragīti*, or Diamond Songs tradition (*dohā* and *caryāgīti*) of the siddhas in India.[2] P. Kvaerne introduces the origin, purpose and form of the *caryāgīti*, and makes references to what others have said, in the following way:

> The songs were originally intended to be sung. This is evident not only from the term *caryā-gīti* (*gīti* "song") itself, but also from the fact that a *rāga* is indicated for each song in the text of the commentary. Each song has a refrain (*dhruvapada*) indicating that a chorus alternated with a soloist. Charlotte Vaudeville characterizes this kind of poetry as follows, and it is worth quoting her appraisal *in extenso*:
>
> "Like the *dohā*, the *pāda* form seems genuinely popular in origin: it is really a folk-song, adapted to religious purposes. Here again the Sahajiyā Siddhas, together with the Jain Munis, seem to have been the first to use popular lyrical forms to propagate their doctrines. As in the case of the *dohā*s, the *pāda*s are used to express spiritual truths in a form that is readable, accessible, and eminently pleasing to simple folk, and can easily be memorized by them, together with the tune. The *pāda*'s metrical looseness is mainly due to the necessity of adapting the words to melodic variations; it probably also reflects the

[2] See R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, trans. J. E. Stapleton Driver (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972), 260; T. J. Ellingson, "The Mandala of Sound: Concepts and Sound Structures in Tibetan Ritual Music" (Ph.D. diss., Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1979), 243-44 (henceforth referred to as "The Mandala of Sound"); and Per K. Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized: An Inquiry into the Nature and Form of the Songs ascribed to the Sixth Dalai Lama*, heft 25 (Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1990), 15 (henceforth referred to as *Divinity Secularized*).

> indifference of uneducated audiences to prosodical subtleties."[3]
>
> It is known that dance and song played an important part in tantric rites,[4] and allusion is made to this in CG 17.5 [= the fifth line of the seventeenth song from the *Caryāgīti*, an anthology of Buddhist tantric songs; V. S.]. Bandoghaṭīya Sarvānanda bears witness from the 12th century A.D. that poems were sung "either solo or in chorus to the accompaniment of cymbals, anklebells, mṛdāṅgas (drums) and such other musical instruments."[5]

Summarizing, both the *caryāgīti* and the *dohā* were sung. They seem to have been adaptations from folk songs popular in form, and were aimed at instructing and pleasing a general audience. Moreover, from the *Hevajra* tantra and other tantras it is known that both song and dance were important in tantric rites in India.

It may have been Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros who introduced the custom of this tradition to Tibet.[6] According to the biography of Mar pa written by the "madman" from Gtsang, Gtsang smyon He ru ka, at the turn of the sixteenth century,[7] Mar pa is said to have received a

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[3] C. Vaudeville, *Kabir*, part 1 (London: 1974), 54, quoted in Per Kvaerne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs: A Study of the Caryāgīti*, Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi. II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse, Skrifter, Ny Serie No. 14 (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget; Irvington-on-Hudson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 8. (Henceforth referred to as *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*.)

[4] Kvaerne refers in his footnote to D. L. Snellgrove, ed., trans., *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study. Part I. Introduction and Translation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), II.iv. 6-12, in *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*, 8.

[5] Atindra Mojumder, *The Caryāpadas*, rev. ed. (Calcutta: Naya Prokash, 1973), 7, cited in Kvaerne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*, 8.

About these songs in the present day, Kvaerne gives further information from other authors:

> According to S. B. Dasgupta, who collected new *caryā* songs (as yet unpublished) from Nepal, "these songs are still being sung by the Vajrācāryas in Nepal to the accompaniment of dance and instrumental music." According to Sāṃkṛtyāyan, the "*cacā*" (*caryā*) songs are still being sung in Nepal to a special melody, which he suggests might well be the same as that employed by the Indian Siddhas themselves. Unfortunately, he does not give further details.

For this, see Kvaerne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*, 8.

[6] Herbert V. Guenther has claimed this in *Ecstatic Spontaneity: Saraha's Three Cycles of Dohā* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1993), 10 (henceforth referred to as *Ecstatic Spontaneity*); Ellingson in "The Mandala of Sound," 243-44.

[7] The biography of Mar pa was written around 1505.

transmission of the *dohā*s from the siddha Maitrīpa at the monastery of Blazing Fire Mountain:

> ....Marpa made offerings to please the guru [Maitrīpa] and arranged feast *torma*s to please the *ḍākini*s. Thus, many wondrous signs arose. The guru gave him the oral instructions and transmission of *mahāmudrā*, the *Āryamañjuśrī nāma saṅgīti* along with its commentary, and the *dohā*s along with their explanation. Marpa's doubts were completely cleared away. When he practiced these teachings, excellent experiences and realizations arose in his mind, and so he was very pleased.[8]

Though there is no evidence of actual translations of the *dohā*s by Mar pa, he seems to have brought the distinguishing character of these songs to Tibet:

> While we cannot point to an explicit link between the *Treasury of Dohā Verses* and Mar pa, he is more than any traveler and translator responsible for importing the ethos of Saraha's poetic instructions, an ethos which was to blossom into a truly Tibetan tradition under his disciple Mi la ras pa.[9]

There are no *mgur* of the style belonging to the *phyi dar* that are attributed to anyone earlier than Mar pa, and it seems that his transmission of the ethos of the *dohā*s made an indelible mark on *mgur* from that point on. I quote P. Sørensen at length on this momentous occurrence and the transmission's significance in Tibet, especially in light of its influence on Mi la ras pa:

> The single most decisive incitement in [Mi la ras pa's] song-lyrics, no doubt an orientation which was later refined in the tradition he initiated, and which moreover gave rise and name to a whole genre, was the inspiration he derived from the *mahāsiddha* tradition of the Indian yogin, with which Mi la ras

[8] Nālandā Translation Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa, trans., *The Life of Marpa the Translator: Seeing Accomplishes All* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), 28.

[9] Nor did Atiśa, who also received *dohā*s directly from Maitripa, translate them into Tibetan. For this reason Schaeffer considers Vajrapāṇi (born 1017) as the most important person in their transmission to Tibet. See Kurtis Rice Schaeffer, "Tales of the Great Brahmin: Creative Traditions of the Buddhist Poet-Saint Saraha" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2000), 123, 125-26.

> pa and his bKa' brgyud pa lineage of Tibetan tantric adepts considered themselves spiritually affiliated in direct line. To Mi la ras pa esoteric instructions (*zhal gdams*), yogic-meditative teachings and revelations were transmitted from his teacher Mar pa Chos kyi Blo gros (.....) of lHo brag and further back from the Indian yogin-saints Nāropa (.....) and Tilopa.[10]

Much has been written about the huge impact Mi la ras pa is said to have had on the development of the style of *mgur* in the *phyi dar*. Some Tibetologists believe that Mi la ras pa himself brought together elements of style from the *mgur* of the *snga dar*, the Early Diffusion of Buddhism, with elements of the *vajragīti*.[11] Concerning yet another fusion, I quote Stein on what he considered to be one of Mi la ras pa's greatest innovations:

> ....[Mi la ras pa] annexed and adapted this foreign model [the mystical songs (*dohā*) of the Indian Tantrists] to the indigenous songs of his country. He certainly did so from personal preference, but also with the idea of popularizing Buddhist thought and making it more familiar by putting it into folk-songs.[12]

Unfortunately, the source for Mi la ras pa's *mgur 'bum* is a compilation made more than three centuries after his death and we cannot know the original texts of his songs.

Of course, many other adaptations besides the substitution of Tibetan folk songs for Indian ones as the basis for melodies had to be made in order to transfer the style of the *vajragīti* into Tibet. Exact details of the development of the tradition for translating the *vajragīti*, such as specifics of style in the Tibetan language and the point at which these translations were likely to influence Tibetan song writers, is a topic for another book and beyond the scope of mine. Regardless of the particulars, it is remarkable that parallel lines of transmission of the teachings and of the distinguishing character of songs as a medium for passing those teachings to others came from the *mahāsiddha*s. The style of the *vajragīti* adapted to the

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[10] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 15.

[11] Ellingson, "The Mandala of Sound," 244-47; Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 14; Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 373; and Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 261.

[12] Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 260.

Tibetan language and indigenous folksongs produced a new style that took hold of the imagination of many of those in Tibet who wanted to find a new way of appealing to the people that was accessible and pleasing, just as the *vajragīti* had been in India.

Sørensen continues with details about the style of the *vajragīti* and about their Tibetan translations:

> The spiritual *dohā* and *caryā* songs, themselves of folk origin, were composed by the tantric siddhas of India where they had turned out to be an apt medium to propagate their doctrines, coating and veiling the esoteric message in allusive phrases and in an enigmatic language...., rich in imagery and replete with double entendre and homonymous puns. The Tibetan translations of these collections of mystic songs gave in turn their Tibetan confrères inspiration to a new way of expressing their religious experience and awareness (*nyams len, nyams rtogs*), their meditative realization (*sgrub pa*) and their esoteric instructions (*zhal gdams*)....
>
> The tradition quickly gained a firm footing in Tibet not only in the spiritual transmission lineages of the bKa' brgyud pas but also within other denominations. These popular songs were commonly known as *rdo rje'i glu* or *mgur ma* (*vajragīti*)....A large number of adepts and renowned mystics, but also traditional monk-scholars took recourse to express their religious joy and praise, their devotion and their realization and raptures in similar *mgur ma*s....[13]

Summarizing, Tibetan translations of the *vajragīti*—themselves of folk origin and sung by the *mahāsiddha*s of India—inspired members of the Bka' brgyud pa sect and some others as well to adapt the style of the *vajragīti* for use in Tibet for a similar purpose: expressing their own religious experiences and teachings in a more accessible way. These songs were called *mgur ma* (or *mgur*), and they came to be sung by a large number of recluses, as well as by some monks based in larger monasteries.

[13] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 15-16.

In the late fifteenth century, Gtsang smyon He ru ka made a compilation of Mi la ras pa's *mgur 'bum* and had it printed.[14] This in itself was a big milestone in the history of *mgur* in the *phyi dar*, since after that, many lamas and yogins read what was attributed to Mi la ras pa and wrote amazing *mgur*.[15] In addition to the songs of siddhas, some of the lama's instructions (*zhal gdams*) were *mgur* and played a role in the continuing transmission of the genre as well. But the situation was more complex than just a proliferation of *mgur*, since there was a development in their style as well. Although songs were written by later composers who had read Mi la ras pa and were influenced by him, the songs could contain important differences from Mi la ras pa's *mgur*. This was because the Indian treatise on poetics, the *Kāvyādarśa*, had already been translated and awareness of it spread quickly. *Mgur* adopted poetic figures from this work of Daṇḍin:

> ཡིན་ན་ཡང་། ཕྱི་དར་གྱི་དུས་སུ་སྙན་ངག་མེ་ལོང་མའི་གཞུང་བོད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་ཚོགས་ཐོག་ཏུ་དར་ཁྱབ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཆེ་བས། མགུར་གླུ་ལའང་སྙན་ངག་གི་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བཅངས་པའི་ཁྱད་ཆོས་དང་ལྡན་ཏེ།..... [16]
>
> But, because the spreading of the *Kāvyādarśa* through the Tibetan society at the time of the *phyi dar* was so great, *mgur* also possessed characteristics which were bound by *snyan ngag*......

Moreover, *mgur* also incorporated some influence from the "eloquent sayings" by Sa skya Paṇḍita:

> མགུར་ཕྱི་དར་གྱི་གླུ་ལ་སྙན་ངག་གི་ཤན་ཞུགས་པར་མ་ཟད། ད་དུང་ལེགས་བཤད་ཀྱི་ཤན་ཞུགས་ཀྱང་ཆེ་སྟེ། ལ་ལ་ནི་"ས་སྐྱའི་ལེགས་བཤད་"ཀྱི་འདྲ་བཤུས་ལྟ་བུ་རེད།[17]

[14] The woodblocks were probably made between 1488 and 1495. See Lobsang P. Lhalungpa, trans., *The Life of Milarepa*, xxx.

[15] Don grub rgyal acknowledges Skal ldan rgya mtsho as one of those *mgur* writers. See Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu byung 'phel gyi lo rgyus dang khyad chos bsdus par ston pa rig pa'i khye'u rnam par rtsen pa'i skyed tshal*, in *Dpal don grub rgyal gyi gsung 'bum* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), 486. (Henceforth referred to as *Bod kyi mgur glu*.)

[16] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 486. I will show some examples of the influence of Daṇḍin's work on Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* in Chapter 9.

[17] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 487.

> Not only did the *mgur* of the *phyi dar* have the outside influence of *snyan ngag*; the influence of the *Legs bshad* was also great. Some [*mgur*] are like copies of Sa skya [Paṇḍita's] *Legs bshad.*

Don grub rgyal quotes a *mgur* that is practically copied from Sa skya Paṇḍita's (1182–1251) verses.[18]

But in spite of having various influences from the *Kāvyādarśa* and Tibetan classical verse, the root of *mgur* is the Tibetan folksong. Don grub rgyal attests to that:

> མགུར་གླུ་སྔ་དར་དང་ཕྱི་དར་གང་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། དེའི་རྨང་གཞི་ནི་དམངས་ཁྲོད་ཀྱི་གླུ་ཡིན་ལ། རྒྱུ་མཚན་དེ་ནི་མི་ལ་རས་པའི་མགུར་གླུ་ལས་མཚོན་ཐུབ་པར་མ་ཟད། བྱ་བཏང་བྱམས་པ་ཆོས་དར་གྱི་མགུར་མ་ལས་ཀྱང་མཚོན་ཐུབ།[19]

> Whether *mgur* is from the *snga dar* or *phyi dar*, its root is popular song: not only is it possible to illustrate [the influence of popular song on] *mgur* of Mi la ras pa, but also [to illustrate its influence on] *mgur* of Bya btang Byams pa chos par.

Don grub rgyal gives an illustration to show that a *mgur* of Bya btang Byams pa chos dar is based on songs of the common people. Byams pa chos dar's *mgur* has eight beats per line. This is a meter often found in the folksongs of Amdo[20] and I will show later that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses it frequently.[21]

In order to further understand what *mgur*[22] is, I will adopt R. Jackson's descriptions that place it within the larger context of Tibetan verse itself. He calls *mgur* one of the three genres which together "roughly comprise the Tibetan poetic canon." (He excludes

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[18] Sa skya Paṇḍita's verse 87 can be found in James E. Bosson, ed., trans., *A Treasury of Aphoristic Jewels: The Subhāṣitaratnanidhi of Sa skya Paṇḍita in Tibetan and Mongolian*, Indiana University Publications: Uralic and Altaic Series 92 (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1969), 56.

[19] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 488.

[20] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 488.

[21] I will provide further evidence of the influence of folksongs on Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* in Chapters 8, 10 and in the coda.

[22] Jackson and I are limiting ourselves to *mgur* of the Period of the Later Diffusion of Buddhism in the following descriptions. *Mgur* from the period of the Tibetan Empire has been commented on by Ellingson in "The Mandala of Sound," 229-33, and by Jackson in "'Poetry' in Tibet," 372-73.

the Ge sar epic from his scope of study.) These three genres, *glu*, *mgur* and *snyan ngag*, are related but distinguishable. Jackson states,

> *Glu*, which remains in Tibetan as a general term for "song," is the earliest, most indigenous, most secular, and most orally and musically oriented of the genres. *mGur*, which originally was either a synonym or a subdivision of *glu*, came eventually to denote a more Buddhistic type of "song," and might be either Tibetan or Indian in its inspiration, oral or written in its style. *sNyan ngag*, "speech [agreeable] to the ear," is an ornate, written, Indian-inspired type of Buddhist (and occasionally secular) poetry that did not appear until the thirteenth century, well after the two genres.[23]

Hence, *mgur* can be situated between *glu* and *snyan ngag*.[24] Of course there is a wide range of qualities in the verses belonging to any of these three genres, but certain generalizations can be made about the characteristics of each group. Generally speaking, *mgur* are more Buddhist than *glu*, which tend to be secular. *Mgur* are more formal stylistically than *glu* but less formal than *snyan ngag*. *Mgur* are oral or written, whereas *glu* are always sung and *snyan ngag* are always written. *Mgur* can be of Tibetan and Indian inspiration, whereas *glu* usually have very little Indian inspiration and *snyan ngag* have a considerable amount.[25]

Mgur *as a Means of Expression for Skal ldan rgya mtsho*

Now that we have looked at what some Tibetologists and Indologists have written about the style of the *vajragīti*, their transmission to Tibet, the inspiration that resulted in creating a new style of Tibetan verse, and some adaptations attributed to Mi la ras pa and later writers, let us focus on Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* themselves: the

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[23] Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 369-70.

[24] The *Mahāvyutpatti* gives *glu* as the equivalent of *saṁgīti*, and *glu dbyangs* as the equivalent of *saṁgīti* and *gīta*. There is no entry for *mgur*. Ryozaburo Sakaki, ed., trans., *Honyaku Myogi Taishu: Bon zo kan wa yonyaku taiko* (Tokyo: Toshokankokai, 1981), 37, 43, 52. Ryozaburo Sakaki, comp., ed., *Honyaku Myogi Taishu* (Tokyo: Toshokankokai, 1981), 38, 66, 290, 331, 364.

[25] Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 369.

topics Skal ldan rgya mtsho sang about and what he himself says about this genre.

The topics of the *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* can be roughly broken down into the following categories. The difference between categories is sometimes slight, so I have rounded off my percentages to the nearest 5%.[26] They will serve as an indication of where Skal ldan rgya mtsho's interests lay in creating his *mgur*.[27]

advice to others	30%
own experience	20%
general teaching	15%
advice to himself	15%
petitions	5%
autobiography	5%
eulogy	5%
history	5%
nature	.5%
prayer	.5%
biography	.5%
lament over loss of teacher	.5%
message	.5%
closing dedication	.5%

From the table above, we see that roughly 80% of the *mgur* deal with the general topic of teaching, whether it be in the form of advice to others or himself, general teaching (with no recipient implied), or relating his own experience.

Next, I will turn to what Skal ldan rgya mtsho himself says about his *mgur*. As I mentioned above, Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote mainly in prose that came to be printed in eight hundred folios[28] to pay homage, report bibliographical and historical information, expound philosophies and explain tantric practices. Information available to me at this present time about when these pieces were written is very

[26] Percentages less than 1% have been rounded off to the nearest half of a percent.

[27] For *mgur* that involve several topics, partial credit has been assigned to each category.

[28] This figure refers to the Rong bo monastery woodblock edition of 1987.

scant, and he may well have written these fifty-nine pieces throughout the extent of his adult life.[29] The bulk of *mgur* that are dated are from after the year 1662 (when he was 56) and continue up to the year of his death in 1677, at the age of 71.[30] What did this genre, which he employed in at least the latter thirty years of his life, mean to him? To find out, let us turn to his *mgur*, since he often comments self-consciously on his poetry. The end of Mgur VII-16 states,

འདི་རང་དང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་ཕྱིར་དུ། །
དུས་དེ་རིང་ཉམས་དགར་གླུ་རུ་བླངས། །
གླུ་འདི་འདྲ་ལེན་ན་རི་ལ་ཤོག །
དགེ་འདིས་ཀྱང་རང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་ཤོག །[31]

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[29] Only three dates are given in the colophons of the texts in Volumes Ka through Nga of the *Gsung 'bum*: 1639 (Ka-2.1), 1644 (Ka-6) and 1676 (Kha-1).

[30] There are thirty-six *mgur* with dates in the *Mgur 'bum*. The distribution of those and two *mgur* cycles that can be dated from the biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho is as follows:

Year	Age	Number of *Mgur*
1633	27	2 cycles*
1647	41	6
1649	43	1
1651	45	1
1662	56	4
1666	60	9
1668	62	4
1669	63	4
1670	64	1
1671	65	2
1673	67	1
1676	70	1
1677	71	2

* See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 23-24.

In addition to the spurt of activity that occurred after 1662, the year 1647 was a time in which he wrote several *mgur*. The dates of some other *mgur* may be suggested only very loosely by place names and personal names.

The reader should be reminded of two things here: age in Tibet is one year ahead of the corresponding number in the West, since babies are already one year old when they are born. Also, Tibetan years and Western years do not coincide exactly, so the years cited in the table above are approximations (the margin of error being just a few months).

[31] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 160/ 142.

In order to benefit myself and others,
Today [I] joyfully sang this song.
If [you] sing a song like this, come to the mountains.
May this merit also come to benefit myself and others.

The purpose of any Buddhist instruction is to benefit oneself and others, and this is the overriding principle in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*. Whom did he hope to benefit with them? The colophons of 53 *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* state to whom he gave the *mgur*. Of these, he sang nearly half or twenty-two of them to himself, giving himself advice, sometimes cheerfully, sometimes in jest, with the hope of benefiting himself. Others he sang or wrote for a variety of renunciants, mountain hermits, monks in assemblies, and so on.[32] The following table will give an indication of who requested the *mgur* and/or received them.

Individuals	
monks	16
disciples	10
disciple-mountain hermits	1
mountain hermits	6
mountain hermit monks	2
spiritual friends	10
elders	3
practitioners	2
aspirants	several
patron	1
Groups:	
groups of mountain hermits	3
groups of disciple-renunciants	3
groups of monks	1
groups of spiritual friends	1

[32] His *mgur* and colophons sometimes refer to recipients of the *mgur* as belonging to these general categories. Twenty-three recipients are named. Some can be identified in the biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. About others, I have no information. Similarly, those who urged him to sing a song are referred to at times under the general heading of "disciples," and twenty-six of them are named. About many of these I have no more information, but further descriptions in front of some of their names indicate something about who they are. Most often, the name of someone who received a *mgur* or who urged him to sing a *mgur* appears only once.

Singing out of joy was common for him, as the following excerpts will show: “Skal ldan rgya mtsho spoke this also through the power of joy at a solitary place” (VII-2);[33] “spoke to himself senselessly in the manner of a jest” (VIII-10);[34] “spoke cheerfully to the mountain hermits of Bkra shis ’khyil” (VIII-28);[35] “In .... place, ... I will sing this happy song” (X-17);[36] and “done in jest and laughter” (VIII-9).[37] (Later we will see that many other *mgur* were inspired by sadness.)

The locations of seventy-two *mgur* are identified. Of these, twenty-five were sung at the mountain hermitage of Bkra shis ’khyil, which became Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s base from about age sixty-four onward.[38] The beauties of Bkra shis ’khyil are beyond words. It has a lovely forest and a panoramic view of nearly three hundred and sixty degrees that extends out over valleys and mountain ranges. The name Bkra shis ’khyil comes up again and again in the colophons, but there are also about thirty-five place names that appear only once or a few times. Some of them are identified by Skal ldan rgya mtsho or the present-day locals as mountain hermitages. Sometimes he does not identify a place where he wrote or sang a *mgur* by name, but by description. Here are some examples of what he says about these places: “[I] am singing this melodious song in a beautiful solitary place” (IX-7);[39] “at a beautiful solitary place” (VII-4);[40] “in a meadow in front of the deity of Mo nom g.yu rtse” (X-10);[41] “on the high peak Lha gnyan rgod” (XIII-5);[42] “on a mountain peak” (X-21);[43] “at a mountain hermitage on the peak of a high mountain” (XI-22);[44] “in a mountain hermitage near Rong bo [monastery]” (IV-13);[45] and “in a solitary meadow” (X-7).[46]

[33] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 138.
[34] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 178.
[35] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 196.
[36] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 237.
[37] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 177.
[38] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 66.
[39] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 207.
[40] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 142.
[41] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 226.
[42] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 340.
[43] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 245.
[44] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 286.
[45] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 86.
[46] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 222.

From these examples, we know that Skal ldan rgya mtsho feels inspired to sing in beautiful solitary places, and since he at times sings for others, it seems that they also are recluses. He apparently wrote down the majority of his *mgur* himself. This is substantiated by numerous colophons that refer to him as the writer. We know only four of his *mgur* that were written down by other scribes.[47]

Sometimes he has recollections when he is out in nature by himself. The introduction to Mgur III-3 exemplifies this:

> དུས་ཉིན་ཞིག་[48] སྒྱེད་གསུམ་མཐོན་པོའི་རྩེ་ར། །
> ཕུ་སེ་ཀུའི་ཛ་རྒྱུད་[49] བལྟ་རུ་ཕྱིན། །
> རི་གངས་དཀར་ཚར་དུ་དང་ར་བ་རྣམས། །
> ཕྱི་མིག་ཡུལ་སྣང་ཚེ་བླ་མ་དྲན། །
>
> རྗེ་མཚུངས་མེད་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་གི །
> དྲིན་བཟང་པོ་དྲན་ཏེ་གླུ་འདི་ལེན། །[50]

> One day on the high peak of Sgyed gsum,
> [I] went to see the clay range of Phu se ku.
> When the row of white snow-mountains appeared in [my]
> outer vision,
> [I] recalled [my] lama.
>
> Recalling the good kindness of the unsurpassable lord,
> Bstan 'dzin blo bzang,[51] [I] sing this song.

This introduction to Mgur II-4 makes it clear that the recollections that spark songs are not always of things or people Skal ldan rgya mtsho cherishes:

> དུས་ཉིན་ཞིག་[52] འཁོར་ལོ་སྡོམ་པའི་གནས། །
> གནས་ཁྱུད་འཕགས་གཉའ་གོང་བྲག་གི་འདབས། །

[47] These are Thos bsam rgya mtsho (I-5), Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan (V-13), and Bde ba'i 'byung gnas (XI-18 and XII-13).
[48] *zhig* BCD; *cig* A.
[49] *rgyud* AB; *brgyud* CD.
[50] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 36/ 33.
[51] Bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho, also frequently called Sde pa Chos rje, was an important lama of Skal ldan rgya mtsho in Amdo, as I related in Chapter 1.
[52] *zhig* B; *cig* ACD.

འདབས་སྤང་ལྗོངས་སྟེང་དུ་འཆག་པའི་ཚེ། །
ཚེ་འདིར་ཞེན་སྒོམ་པས་གླུ་འདི་ལེན། །[53]

[This] day on the side of the especially noble Gnya’ gong brag,
The dwelling-place of ’Khor lo sdom pa,
Since [I] am contemplating [my] longing for this life
While treading on the grassy meadow, [I’m] singing this song.

Attachment to this life was certainly something Skal ldan rgya mtsho wanted to obliterate.

Here is an excerpt from the introduction to Mgur III-4 indicating that sadness and nature inspired the song:

དུས་ཉིན་གཅིག་སྐྱོ་ཤས་ཐན་ཐུན་གྱིས། །
གནས་ཤིན་ཏུ་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ་འདོད་ནས། །
ཕུ་སེ་ཀུའི་གངས་ལ་བལྟས་པའི་ཚེ། །
གླུ་ངག་གི་ལམ་ནས་འདི་ལྟར་གླངས[54]། །[55]

Wanting to go to a very solitary place
Because of a little sadness one day,
When [I] saw the snow of Phu se ku,
A song in this manner arose from [my] throat.

Other colophons or statements in the *mgur* indicate that sadness was frequently a motivating force for singing or speaking: “a eulogy in the manner of being oppressed by misery regarding rje lama” (II-6);[56] “a beseeching through a sad song in the manner of a lament for that very lord [Ko’u rin po che Chos rgya mtsho dpal bzang po, who had passed away]” (IV-14);[57] “Because a little sadness arose, [I] spoke these words” (VI-1);[58] and “being sad because of signs of old age having appeared....” (IX-2).[59]

Sometimes when he sings a sad song, he feels uplifted from the intensity of the emotion. This excerpt from Mgur X-5 is such a case,

[53] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 26/ 23.
[54] *blangs* CD; *blang* AB.
[55] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 38/ 34.
[56] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 32.
[57] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 88.
[58] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 122.
[59] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 200.

where Skal ldan rgya mtsho expresses sadness and regret for many lines, and then comments,

> འཕྲལ་འཕྲལ་བློ་སྣ་ཡང་ཡང་ཐུང་ལ། །
> སྐྱོ་ཤས་གླུ་དབྱངས་སྙན་མོ་འཐེན་[60] དང་། །
> སེམས་ལ་ཡར་སྐྱིད་ཙུང་ཟད་འབྱུང་ངོ་། །[61]

> Right at this moment [my] various thoughts are becoming shorter and shorter, and
> [I] am singing a mellifluous sad song, and
> [My] spirits are a little uplifted.

As for the process of creating a *mgur*, sometimes he relates that a song arose spontaneously, as in Mgur III-4 cited above, inspired by a feeling of sadness and a vision of a mountain.[62] In the colophon to Mgur XII-25, he writes that he wrote whatever arose:

> ཞེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་ངོས་བཟང་གུར་ཁང་དུ་གང་བྱུང་དུ་བྲིས་པའོ། །[63]

Mgur XII-25 has one of the loosest structures in the entire *Mgur 'bum*, with very long lines ranging from ten to eighteen beats each. But the styles in the *Mgur 'bum* vary considerably from structurally casual to more formal. This makes it seem likely that some *mgur* were spontaneously sung and then written down, while others were spontaneously sung and then improved on paper, or even worked out on paper first, to be sung later.

In summary, in this introduction to the genre of *mgur* and what it meant to Skal ldan rgya mtsho based on his colophons and other comments about his songs, we learn that his songs were closely associated with his life as a recluse and were mainly for the purpose of instruction in solitary places, whether for himself or for other hermits. These features place them in the continuing tradition of the *caryāgīti* and *dohā* sung by tantric Indian siddhas and their subsequent development as *mgur* in Tibet. In particular, we learn from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's words that he sang many *mgur* when he

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[60] *'then* CD; *then* AB.

[61] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 218/ 192.

[62] For other examples of *mgur* he says arose spontaneously, see Mgur XII-24, 325/ 288; and Mgur XII-25, 325-26/ 288-89.

[63] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 326/ 289.

was at the hermitage Bkra shis ’khyil or at various other mountain peaks or solitary places, where his inspiration to sing sometimes came from being in those beautiful, quiet places in a state of joy or sorrow. Now I will turn to Part III of this book, an analysis of various stylistic features in the *Mgur ’bum*, in which I will explore folk influences as well as some formal influences of Indian versification upon his songs. First I will discuss a very curious form he used, dialogues with animals.

PART THREE

STYLES IN THE *MGUR 'BUM*

CHAPTER SIX

DIALOGUES: *MGUR* IN CONVERSATIONS WITH ANIMALS

In my four previous chapters I discussed at length Skal ldan rgya mtsho's preoccupation with the themes of residing in solitude, renunciation and practice. Here I would like to show how he expresses those themes in a poetic form that is very unusual. Two cycles of poems that he wrote in 1633 when he was twenty-seven[1] playfully portray some of the most important themes he has to teach through the medium of conversations with animals. Both of these cycles involve dialogues between Skal ldan rgya mtsho and insects, one with bees and the other with lice, fleas and lice eggs.[2] While some specifics of the forms of these dialogues, such as meter and stanza patterns, will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, here I will show how the themes are expressed in this unique dialog format. The Tibetan text for both cycles is in Appendix A.

First I will deal with Mgur cycle IV-1, the conversations with bees, which has six sections:

section	speaker	meter	stanzas	# of lines
1	bees	2 + 2 + 2 + 3	largely of 4 lines	53
2	Skal ldan	"	free	4
3	bees	"	of 4 lines, the first line is repeated	24
4	Skal ldan	3 + 2 + 3	of 2 lines	4
5	bees	"	free	12
6	Skal ldan	2 + 2	free	4

[1] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 23-24. These are the earliest *mgur* for which I have dates.

[2] Skal ldan rgya mtsho's biographer insinuates that the bees symbolize Zhabs drung rin po che; and the fleas, lice and lice eggs symbolize Ko'u ba chos rje rin po che. Both lamas were invited to Rong bo yar nang and gave textual transmissions and initiations there the year these *mgur* cycles were written. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 23-24.

There is a prose introduction to the entire cycle, as well as brief prose explanations between each of the sections. Finally, the cycle ends with a colophon which states, "Skal ldan also composed this."

Before giving the full translation, I will give a summary of what is said in the sections. In the first, the bees give Skal ldan rgya mtsho advice, saying that his actions are senseless and that the animals know more. Skal ldan rgya mtsho criticizes the bees and says that bees speaking a human language is an unlucky omen. Then the bees ridicule what he has said and relate to him what they consider really bad omens to be: the corrupt practices of monks and novices. They tell him that although he understands religion, because he does not practice it, he will only confuse others by trying to expound it. In the fourth section, Skal ldan rgya mtsho exclaims that although he has seen the faces of a hundred lamas, he has never heard a deeper teaching, and that the bees are right. He says he is going to stay in solitude in order to practice religion, in order not to be deceived. In the fifth section, the bees are emphatic about the necessity of him being rigid with his vows. Finally, Skal ldan rgya mtsho calls the bees his friends and says he is going off to meditate. Here is my translation in full of Mgur cycle IV-1:

Moreover, on one occasion the space between the stooping trees was adorned with such beams of sunlight like sections of the moon and twisted in the manner of swastikas, because of the drooping of the rose tree's fruits, flowers and leaves, at a time in which [I] was in a carefree state of jest and laughter, and so on, [they] sang this buzzing song of poetry through [their] windpipes, changing the dancing of [their] many wings.

Hey, hey, listen, scholar under the tree!
Because of making careless jokes, games, and so on in past lives,
From beginningless time up until now, passing nights and days
[You] have wandered about in this existence.

Because of this way of still acting in contradiction to religion,
From this point in time onwards it seems that
[You] will bid farewell to the continual bliss of heaven and liberation.

[Regarding] truth and falsehood, see that [your] thoughts are in
agreement with religion. Understand!
The root of religion reaches into to one's own mind.

Until [you] have tamed the nature of mind,
Although [you] expound whatever holy teachings, [since you do
so] as a parrot would expound them,
[Your] talk does not hit the target.

If this which is wandering independently, the elephant of
[your] mind,
Is not tied by the rope of a lama's oral instructions
To a firm pillar in a solitary place,
There is no certainty that [you] will go amidst the woods, [the real]
riches and honor.

Since the holy lama has brought whatever benefit to you
Perpetually through the nectar of religion,
Continually make [your] prayers to the lama,
Whose kindness is even greater than that of all Buddhas and
bodhisattvas.
[His] blessings will enter [into you].

If the blessings have entered [into you], experiential knowledge,
qualities and so forth
[Will instantaneously assemble in you], just as we at once assemble
In a grove of lotuses, even without calling [to one another],
And then [you] will be led to the city of liberation [and] paradise.

In this time in which a good foundation, like a wish-fulfilling
jewel,
Is very hard to obtain,
If [you] have not received the essence of the profound,
holy religion,
Although [you] repent it at death, would [it] not be too late
to change?

You have not made any sense of [your] life up to now.
If [you] still continue to consume the remainder of your life
senselessly,
Making yourself stay in your homeland, this prison of demons,
You would not be counted as a human being.

Why? [You] go about meaninglessly, in a senseless life,
With senseless singing, dancing, eating, drinking and so on,
But we swarm of animals are much more prudent than you.

As for that human who has been scared because of the fright of the three evil rebirths,
And takes refuge from the heart in the Three Jewels,
Wherever the person who renounces sin and receives pure virtue goes,
And wherever he stays, he will be reborn in a good life.

[But as for the one who clings to] all these samsaric places, fiery pits,
Earthly goods and pleasures like honey that appears on the blade of a knife,
As for *bodhicitta* by all those sons of Buddhas,
Even though [it] is the center of a meditation practice, [he] rejects this very thing.
And so the lama who benefits [from] other [things] does not believe us in any respect.

Many religions which do not eliminate grasping egocentricity
And which eliminate the lack of self are appearing in this region.

How awful, the evil times which have established what is as what is not—
How really pitiful for the majority of the religious!
[And] having received an initiation, [but] not observing the vows,
Though [people] have meditated via the Generation and Completion Stages,
[The benefits] are like a castle on water [which] cannot be relied on.
[So] studying from the foundation of the path [is what's necessary].

[So they] said, to which in response I spoke these words:

A bee speaking human speech is a bad omen!
Although we humans enter into whatever activities such as joking, playing, and so forth,
We know [that is not all there is to life]!
Your yak yak is insolent towards life!

In response to what [I] had said [they said]

A bee speaking human speech is a bad omen!?
All the monks and novices who indulge in such things as
Women and wine, fighting [and] robbery, having renounced samsara well
In front of abbots and presiding masters are bad omens!

A bee speaking human speech is a bad omen!?
All those who at first studied well the Buddha's words
And then in the middle who perform village rites and sell religion
In order to receive the wealth of others are bad omens!

A bee speaking human speech is a bad omen!?
All those disciples whose vows have been sullied,
Who received many religious teachings because of a lama's kindness,
[And] after a mere while cast aside the net of the lama are bad omens!

A bee speaking human speech is a bad omen!?
Most tantric practitioners, who although not knowing Buddhism
Do most of the Dharma talks, [and thus] harm the doctrine of the Buddha
By having the appearance of lamas, are bad omens!

A bee speaking human speech is a bad omen!?
Renunciants carry bows, arrows [and other weapons they] make in hand.
Elevated ones commit shameless acts.
[But] this place [where we bees are] is full of things that are not bad.

A bee speaking human speech is a bad omen!?
Especially you, expounding [religion] to others
Who don't practice it, all the while understanding the holy religion—
This deception is a bad omen.

[So they] said. Then, in response [I] said these words:

Although I have seen the faces of a hundred lamas,
I have not heard a teaching deeper than that!
You're right, bees, right! You bees are right!
Now I'll stay by myself, in order not to waver!

Since [I] said thus, [the bees] said these words:

Do not cast away [your] vows. Be rigid with vows.
Do not cast away [your] oaths. Be rigid with the text of the oath.
Do not cast away [your] promises. Be rigid with promises.
[If you] don't consider those [three strictnesses], [you] are not in the human group.

Considering those three strictnesses,
Go without a doubt into retreat.

We winged animals such as bees
Give offerings of songs at the time of your delight [in retreat].

Roll many instructions for your memory into one!

The religion that is to be striven for, in the manner of one combined action,
Is the observance of the attitude that has renounced [secular] life.

If [you] understand that, it is the king of instructions!

Based on what [the bees] had said, rejoicing, delight and sadness arose together [in me]. [I] decided to go and practice [religion]*, and moreover, at that time made this request:*

Friend bees,
Skal ldan rgya mtsho
Is going to meditate!
Please sing a mellifluous song!

[I] requested.

This also was composed by Skal ldan.[3]

[3] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 64-67/ 58-61.

Now I will turn to the other cycle of poems involving a dialogue between Skal ldan rgya mtsho and other insects, which I have translated in full below. Though it has many parallels with the cycle above, Mgur cycle IV-2 contrasts with IV-1 in a couple of important ways. Mgur cycle IV-2 heavily emphasizes the theme of karma, which in turn the insects give as a reason to live a life of purity in solitude. Furthermore, since there are three groups of insects in the cycle, lice, fleas and lice eggs, the dialogue pattern is more complex than in the preceding one:

section	speaker	meter	stanzas	# of lines
1	Skal ldan to all insects	3 + 2 + 3 throughout	free	12
2	aged louse to his friends		"	4
3	elderly and young lice to Skal ldan		"	12
4	all fleas to Skal ldan		"	8
5	lice eggs to Skal ldan		of 2 lines	4
6	Skal ldan to all insects		free	4
7	all insects to Skal ldan		"	44
8	Skal ldan to all insects		"	4
9	insects to Skal ldan		"	4

Like the cycle of the dialogue with bees, this one has a prose introduction setting the scene and short prose explanations between each of the sections. Its colophon also merely states, “Skal ldan also composed this.”

I will now give a full translation of the cycle of Skal ldan rgya mtsho in conversation with lice, fleas and lice eggs, IV-2:

Also at one time because [I] saw on the surface of my food and garments and so on that there were many lice calmly meandering, many fleas floating about and many lice eggs smiling and hanging out in a relaxed way, and [I] advised [them] as follows:

Listen you lice who are roaming about—
You lice have eaten my body!

Even if you are happy when you eat and drink,
When [I] see you, what do you think?[4]

You thoughtless fleas, skilled in flight,
If you are inseparable from what your body does,
During youth you were afraid of smells going "rrrrr."[5]

True or not, continue eating, and be clear about it!

You bright white and smiling louse eggs,
Even if [you] are like pearls when you are looked at,
When [I] see [my] contaminated garments,
Without thinking of [my] next life, [I] want to kill you.

Because [I] said [that], an aged louse gathered his friends and advised them as follows:

Since I, an elderly louse, am skilled at eating and drinking,
Up to now I have been happy and peaceful.

You youngsters have been eating at inappropriate times.
Will I now also cause my death in connection with a smell?

Relying on what [he] had said, all the young and old lice huddled and made secret council in detail, and replied unanimously to me as follows:

You old monk who knows the karma of virtue and sin!
In previous lives you ate others.
On the strength of that, we will eat you.

[4] I have not translated *yang* at the beginning of the line. It is there to complete the poetic figure (the last syllable of one line is the same as the first syllable in the next line), but doesn't seem to fit in terms of meaning.

[5] This seems to mean dying through pollution, because the young fleas know no better than to be attracted to disgusting, foul stuff.

Now you have difficulty in replying.
Above all, don't lecture us! Think about karma!

Earlier, you human being looked at us [and you] broke out in tears.
Having seen where we were hiding in secret,
[We] didn't believe that [you] would kill us with fingernail
and tooth.
If you were now to kill [some of us], we'll also eat you!

Otherwise, we [and the one] patronized[6]
Will need one another forevermore.

Now whether [we] eat or not eat, [it's] your call.

[So they] said. Also the fleas unanimously said

You listen, our watchman.
We at times make [ourselves] soar up and at times float down.

You, in this ocean of the cycle of the three realms,
Sometimes soar up and sometimes float down.

You don't be [down] there, don't be [down] there—soar
on upwards!
Up on a solitary peak you'll soar in delight.

The nature of your mind will soar in the expanse of the sky.
Don't threaten us—float up like us!

[So they] said. Also the lice eggs, smiling, said this:

In our meditation huts [within] the fabric of [your] clothes,
Our bodies not moving, we will meditate in *samādhi*.

If you delight in meditative states in solitude,
Don't hurt us but dwell as we dwell.

[So they] said. Then I said this to the lice, fleas and lice eggs:

You stupid and dumb insects—
I'm a human being, a monk of noble rank [in comparison to you].

---

[6] I.e. you. In their words, Skal ldan rgya mtsho is the donor patronizing the lice with his offerings.

From among insects, you are the bottom rung!
For you to give me advice! Ha! Ridiculous!

Because [I] said this, the lice, fleas and lice eggs all fell on me and discoursed thus:

Even if we lice, fleas and lice eggs
Act under the power of religion,
We embrace lamas and religious lords on down,
And old beggars on up.

Although [we] act under the power of the world of convention,
As for those such as high kings, noble ladies, ministers,
Subjects, rich people, heroes and people with power,
There is no one that we don't eat or drink.

An association of lice from our group here
Who are black and very hot mouthed
Call you a wealth of rich food.

Because you have eaten dead [killed] food [and] funeral repasts for so long,
It is natural for you to be eaten by us.

We fleas who live here
Don't eat siddhas who live on the peaks of mountains.

You say "Doing village rites is food for my mouth."
Soar and be!

Also, listen, listen, old monk, listen!
Don't eat dead food or funeral repasts and
The black lice won't eat you!

Don't rove about towns but go up to a mountain hermitage.

Isolated, pleasant, on top of green grass in a solitary and pleasant place,
You will dwell in happiness,
And the fleas as a group
Will be committed to never bothering you.

Again—focus the hole of [your] ear for a moment!
Don't look at other people. Look at yourself!
Looking at others is simply pursuing your own benefit.

By breaking away from benefiting yourself, [and] by benefiting the religion and sentient beings,
When [you] die [you] will not be eaten by beguiling evil spirits.

Just as each and every one of us lice, fleas and lice eggs
Has the same idea, namely that it is not necessary to talk
To you who eat meat and drink blood, so you old monks
Who have renounced [life] through the teaching,
[But] who practice the holy religion while thinking about life,
You must not talk to us! Be harmonious with everyone!
Don't be despondent because you have no entourage!

Strive to become completely enlightened, and
When you achieve enlightenment,
We will also be your retinue!

Moreover, listen! When [you] are sitting in meditation
And we bite you,
Recall your karma of past lives,
And being liberated from sinful karma, [you] will exert [yourself] in realizing good karma..

Based on what [the insects] had said [to me], [I] decided to go meditate, and said these words:

Because I have entered the blessing of a holy lama,
Lice, fleas and lice eggs have expounded the religion.

Because religion is deep, [I] have turned my mind to it.
In order to practice religion, I will go to a solitary place!

Because [I] said [that], [the insects] said this:

Without sending what you have explained into the wind,
Go practice for the benefit of [your] own thoughts.

> It's not sufficient to know about religion—[you] have to
> practice it.
> Now, in order to practice it, go to a solitary place!

Thus [they] discoursed.

This also was composed by Skal ldan.[7]

Both Mgur cycle IV-1 and IV-2 deal with conversations with insects that take on a didactic role as Skal ldan rgya mtsho's teachers, and he surprisingly portrays himself in an inferior role to them.[8] He demonstrates a Buddhist quality in the way he has written these cycles, being willing to lower himself, even to the point of being lower than insects. Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Mgur cycles IV-1 and IV-2 are unique dialogues, whose form works very well in a variety of ways to enhance the expression of his message: "go to a solitary place in order to practice religion."

The reasons that Skal ldan rgya mtsho should go live in solitude are given in the form of criticism. And having criticism "come from the mouths of others" enables deep criticism of his way of life—that he has been expounding religion like a parrot but without practicing it, and that he has wasted his life up to the present with "senseless singing, dancing, eating, drinking and so on."[9] And putting criticism of monks and novices in the words of insects especially allows very incriminating things to be stated about them: that they womanize,

[7] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 67-71/ 61-64.

[8] Zhabs dkar was obviously taken and influenced by Mgur cycle IV-1, as he wrote his own conversation with bees, though in his case the bees pay homage to him from the start. The bees refer to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs as predecessors of their own songs. Harking back to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's cycle, Zhabs dkar requests that they be in his retinue when he attains enlightenment:

> My friend the bee, come back again,
> And sing your songs for me, the yogin.
> And once I have reached enlightenment,
> I pray that you, bee, will join my retinue.

For this, see Ricard, trans., *The Life of Shabkar*, 162-63.

Though there are dialogues in Gtsang smyon pa's compilation of Mi la ras pa's *mgur*, Mi la ras pa always performs the role of guiding the one with whom he converses, unless the latter is a teacher.

[9] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 65/ 59.

drink beer, fight, steal, sell religion, break their vows, cast aside their lamas, and give more Dharma talks than anyone.[10]

The dialogue form allows the two sides to have not only contrasting points of view but markedly different types of speech and argumentation. Skal ldan rgya mtsho is initially haughty and short with the insects, reflecting that he thinks that they are so far beneath him as to be not to be worth addressing. The insects, by contrast, want to take time to explain things to Skal ldan rgya mtsho carefully, articulately and logically. The various stages of the conversation make it possible both for him to voice his resistance and be slowly persuaded, and for them to respond to his objections and build their argument and advice to him. Towards the end of each *mgur* cycle, he makes the decision to change his life and behavior, based on what he has learned from the insects. What he says is again very brief (four lines), but this time the brevity indicates not rejection but acceptance. He has no reason to linger over words or lose any more time because he is eager to get to a solitary place to practice religion.

Another way that the form enhances the message in these cycles is seen in Mgur cycle IV-1, in which metrical variances and the progression of the argument go hand in hand. Here there are three different meters. 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 is used for the bees' opening criticism of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, his curt rejection of them, and their argumentative response. The poem has fifty-three long lines of nine syllables each, which emphasizes how much the bees are laying into him. It should also be noted that after some variation in stanza pattern, the bees' speech falls into distinct four-line stanzas as they go on a roll of listing criticisms of the way monks and novices are living. A new meter, that of 3 + 2 + 3, appears when Skal ldan rgya mtsho changes his attitude and decides that the bees are not only right, but have given him a teaching deeper than any he has heard from a hundred lamas.[11] The third meter, that of 2 + 2, appears in his brief closing statement that he is off to meditate in solitude, referred to above. His brief statement, with merely four syllables per line over only four lines, emphasizes the simplicity of his statement, "Friend bees, Skal ldan rgya mtsho is going to meditate. Please sing a mellifluous song!"

[10] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 66/ 60.
[11] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 67/ 60.

A way the form of dialogues with animals also enhances Skal ldan rgya mtsho's overall theme of practice in solitude is demonstrated in Mgur cycle IV-2, in which the nature of the insects closely corresponds with their teachings for him. Lice, fleas and lice eggs are both physically threatening to and threatened by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, who opens the cycle by saying he wants to kill them. This is an ideal setting for the discussion of karma. Furthermore, the fact that there are three groups of insects in the cycle makes it possible for each to express its particular perspective on why he should live a moral life and go practice religion in solitude. The lice point out that whether they bite him or not is entirely up to his karma.[12] The fleas use the theme of their jumping, and advise him not to stay down there, but to soar up like them, where "up on a solitary peak you'll soar in delight."[13] The lice eggs tell him how they experience meditative states in their meditation huts within the fabric of his clothes, and that he also can enjoy these in solitude too, if he does not hurt them.[14]

The two cycles of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's conversations with animals echo the relation of master and disciple. In each case, Skal ldan rgya mtsho poses as the disciple, being lectured to by the insects, here representing the masters. When Skal ldan rgya mtsho decides to go off to meditate in solitude, he departs from the masters. This recalls the usual path of a yogi, who having relied on a qualified master for instructions goes off to practice by himself. Note that the fleas point out that they do not eat siddhas who meditate on mountain peaks. When one becomes a solitary hermit, one is above earthly afflictions.

In general, these are didactic statements, the insects being used as the voice of criticism and advice. Another way of looking at the dialogues that take place in these cycles is as discussions of Skal ldan rgya mtsho with his conscience. Instead of the voice of criticism remaining within his head, it is projected onto animals, making an internal conflict into an external one. Now that we have looked in

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[12] Similarly, the prelude to Mi la ras pa's song about Sgam po pa Bsod nams rin chen (1079–1153) states that "[because of his compassion and purity], no insect ever grew on his body." Chang comments that "It is believed that a truly compassionate Bodhisattva is immune from the attacks of insects or beasts. Tibetan lamas even use this as a yardstick to judge and measure the compassion of their fellow lamas." See Chang, trans., *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* 466, 496 n. 4.

[13] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 68-69/ 62.

[14] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 69/ 62.

depth at the very unusual form of dialogues with animals, I will turn to an analysis of concepts of structural form that are widely applicable to all *mgur*. First, I will examine Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of prosody.

CHAPTER SEVEN

METRICS

Looking further into the structural components of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* in relation to form, in this chapter I will analyze his use of metrics, the very backbone of Tibetan verse. Before doing so, I will first discuss some general characteristics of metrics in Tibet.[1] The choice of a particular meter is a definitive issue in the formation of a song, since other basic considerations such as language and syntax are dependent on this decision. For this reason, we must understand how meters work to gain a deeper understanding of a *mgur* and the skill involved in writing it. I will draw extensively on secondary literature that deals with the notion of prosody, both by Don grub rgyal, the noted Tibetan authority on *mgur*, and by Western analysts. At times I will compare Western notions of metrics with Tibetan ones, in order to clarify the Tibetan use of prosody, and Skal ldan rgya mtsho's in particular.

On the most basic level, the syllable (*tsheg bar*) count of a line of verse (*tshig rkang*) defines its visual-quantitative length[2] and leads to a fundamental distinction Indo-Tibetan theorists recognize between those stanzas (*sho lo ka*) whose lines have the same number of syllables (*tsheg bar do mnyam pa*) and those whose lines do not

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[1] Tibetan metrics are a Tibetanized Sanskrit form. While Indian meters are a function of long and short syllables, Tibetan ones are based on accents.

I thank P. Sørensen for his English definitions of Tibetan technical terms regarding metrics, found in *Divinity Secularized*, 12-28 and 343-44. I have chosen to adopt many of his English equivalents, after reading their corresponding Tibetan terms and viewing the examples in Don grub rgyal's book on *mgur*. I provide P. Sørensen and others' Tibetan equivalents here so that the reader will know which of the concepts I use to explain metrics are recognized by Tibetan theorists.

[2] It may seem that the actual length of a verse when sung would be directly proportionate to the number of syllables that it contains. While surely there is a relation between the visual and audible lengths of a line, they are not necessarily directly proportionate. The current musical tradition employs all kinds of note values in its melismas, in which some beats are heavily ornamented and others are not. This makes the actual duration of some beats much longer than others. In the present section, when I speak of a line's length, I will be referring to its number of syllables.

(*tsheg bar do mi mnyam pa*).[3] In both cases, syllables in a line are subdivided into smaller units. For an example of how a Tibetan expert on verse may describe such a concept, here is an excerpt from the fifth chapter (*Mgur gyi lus kyi skor*) of Don grub rgyal's work on *mgur,* in which he explains how a line of eight syllables may be subdivided:

> ཚིག་བར་བརྒྱད་ལྡན་གྱི་མགུར་གྱི་ལུས། འདི་ལ་རྣམ་པ་བཞི་སྟེ།
>
> 1. ....
>
> 2. ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་མགོ་མ་གསུམ་དང་གཞུག་མ་གསུམ་སྔ་ཕྱིར་གསུམ་རེ་གསུམ་རེ་བྱས་ནས་སྦྱོར་བ་དང་། བར་མ་གཉིས་ཟུང་དུ་སྒྲིག་པ་སྟེ།.......[4]
>
> *Mgur* that have eight syllables per line: regarding this there are four types [of subdivisions], namely
>
> 1. [He describes the first type.]
>
> 2. Having construed and joined the three syllables at the beginning of a line of verse, having done likewise with the three syllables at the end of the line, and reading the middle two [syllables] as a pair:
> for example:........

The *mgur* that Don grub rgyal uses to illustrate his second description of ways to divide eight syllables in a line is from the *Gsung mgur* of Pha bong kha pa:

> དཔེར་ན།
> རྗེ་ཕ་བོང་ཁ་པའི་གསུང་མགུར་ལས།
> ཁྱོད་སྐུ་ཡི་དཔག་བསམ་རབ་བརྟན་ཞིང་། །
> ཉམས་ལེན་གྱི་ཡལ་འདབ་རྒྱས་པའི་རྟེར། །
> གཏན་འདུན་གྱི་འབྲས་བཟང་གཡུར་དུད་བཞིན། །

[3] "......འོན་ཀྱང་མགུར་རང་གི་ཐུན་མོང་མ་ཡིན་པའི་ཁྱད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབང་གིས། རྐང་པར་བཅད་པའི་ལུས་ལའང་ཚིག་བར་དོ་མཉམ་པ་དང་། མི་མཉམ་པའི་དབྱེ་བ་ཡོད་ཅིང་།....."
For this, see Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 491.

[4] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 497.

དབེན་པ་རུ་བག་ཕེབས་སྒྲོ་ལགས་སམ།
ཞེས་དང་།.......[5]

Each line has eight syllables and has been composed in order to form three subdivisions, which have, respectively, three, two and three syllables each.

Western analysts of Tibetan poetry have developed their own vocabulary in order to explain what makes up a subdivision, which they call a "foot" (not to be confused with a Tibetan term for a line of verse, *rkang pa*, which also means "foot"). These scholars agree that there are two types of syllables. Some theorists, such as S. Beyer,[6] make the distinction between stressed and unstressed. Others, such as P. Sørensen,[7] call them strong and weak, in the sense of being semantically strong and semantically weak.[8] Here I shall adopt Sørensen's terminology of strong and weak, since it is not clear to what extent stresses were actually performed in the course of singing a *mgur*. What constitutes a strong/stressed or a weak /unstressed beat? Beyer provides a detailed explanation:

> Every word in classical Tibetan has a single primary stress that falls on the first syllable; bound forms (conjunctions, nominalizers, role particles, bound quantifiers) are thus considered unstressed, as are also *ni* and *yang*, unless the latter is the first word of the preposition; free quantifiers, numerals, and determiners may also be unstressed in a weak position.[9]

Furthermore, each type has its predetermined position in a foot: each foot starts with a strong syllable, and the remaining syllables in the foot (usually one or two) are weak. This describes the two types of feet that Western theorists have recognized to be in systematic use in Tibetan poetry: the foot with two syllables and the one with three.[10]

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[5] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 497.

[6] Stephan Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 408.

[7] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 13.

[8] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 13.

[9] Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language*, 408. It should be noted that whether a beat is strong or weak is not a function of whether its syllable has a high or low tone.

[10] This corresponds to examples Don grub rgyal gives of different subdivisions, yet I glean that he also recognizes the systematic use of the tetrasyllabic foot. See Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 497. I have added space to indicate my

Summarizing, a syllable's syntactic function largely determines its qualification for a strong or weak beat, and hence its position in a foot, or subdivision of a line. This is a crucial point for understanding Tibetan verse:

strong beat position: first syllable of a foot
first syllable of a noun or pronoun
first syllable of a verb
first syllable of a proper name
first syllable of an adjective
first syllable of an adverb
negative particle preceding a verb
first syllable of an interjection
first syllable of a question word

weak beat[11] position: subsequent syllable(s) of a foot
second syllables of a noun, pronoun, verb and other words in first position
nominalizers
role particles
bound quantifiers
ni and *yang*
the following are sometimes unstressed:
conjunctions
free quantifiers
numerals
determiners

---

subdivisions of this excerpt from the *Gsung mgur* of Kun mkhyen 'Brug pa Padma dkar po (1527–92):

དཔའ་	འཛམ་བུ་གླིང་གི་		བྱང་གི་རྒྱུད། །
རི་	ཁ་བ་ཅན་གྱིས་		བསྐོར་བའི་ཞིང་། །
མི་	གདོང་དམར་ཡུལ་གྱི་		ལྷོ་བ་ན། །
མ་	མཁའ་འགྲོའི་	མཆོད་སྡོང་	ར་ལུང་ཐེལ། །

[11] Some of the parts of speech that I have listed in this column I have again quoted from Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language*, 408.

I will now give examples of how Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses meter. The following table shows the distribution of various beats per line and their subdivisions in his *mgur*.[12]

syllables per line	subdivisions	number of *mgur*	percentage of total
Same number of syllables per line			94.5%
4	2 + 2 and 4	1	.4%[13]
5	3 + 2	2	.8%
6	2 + 2 + 2	13	5%
7	2 + 2 + 3	7	3%
	3 + 2 + 2	1	.4%
	2 + 3 + 2	3	1%
8	1 + 2 + 2 + 3	137	54%
	3 + 2 + 3	34	13%
	2 + 2 + 2 + 2	10	4%
	2 + 3 + 3	1	.4%
	2 + 1 + 2 + 3	1	.4%
9	2 + 2 + 2 + 3	26	10%
10	2 + 3 + 2 + 3	1	.4%
	2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2	1	.4%
Different number of syllables per line		15	6%

As the tables show, Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote *mgur* using a wide variety of meters. 94% of them have lines made up of the same number of syllables, and 4% have lines with a different number of syllables. The number of syllables in the former range from four to ten. Skal ldan rgya mtsho employs different sets of subdivisions for the same number of syllables in lines with seven syllables per line, and those with eight. Now I will provide examples of forms that use a certain number of syllables per line and various subdivisions, starting with the smallest number, so that we can see how Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses prosody. Although the choice of meter is a central issue around which the language and syntax of a song revolves, it is

[12] The parts of *mgur* cycles IV-1 and IV-2 have been counted individually, since some of them differ in meter.

[13] All percentages in this section are rounded off to the nearest integer, unless they are less than 1%.

unfortunately lost in translation. For this reason, I will not provide English translations of the verses cited in this chapter. The many meters Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses seem to have been influenced by a wide spectrum of singing styles in Tibet, almost all of them popular, and when possible I will point out other genres of song that share the same meters. Statistics I provide for the frequency with which he uses each meter will emphasize his enthusiasm for writing in many styles.

Four Syllables per Line

2 + 2

This form is used only once, for four short lines. We have seen this passage before, as it belongs to the cycle of *mgur* in conversation with bees, IV-1. I have placed gaps to indicate my subdivisions:

གྲོགས་པོ་   སྦྲང་མ། །
སྐལ་ལྡན་   རྒྱ་མཚོ། །
སྒོམ་ལ་   འགྲོའོ། །
སྙན་པའི་   གླུ་ལོངས། །[14]

In this short remark to the bees that comes at the end of the six-part cycle after Skal ldan rgya mtsho has finally being persuaded by them, he states that he is going to meditate (no further dialog is needed). As my divisions indicate, the basic unit of most of the lines is a foot of two syllables (*tsheg bar cha*). Most Western theorists[15] have referred to this as a “trochee” or “trochaic foot.” J. Vekerdi has taken issue with this terminology, because it implies not only that the syllables are stressed and unstressed but also that their durations are long and short, which is not the case in Tibetan verse:

14 Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 67/ 61.
15 Sørensen, Beyer, Helffer and others.

> There is no doubt that the shortness or length of syllables cannot play any part in Tibetan versification, since classical Tibetan does not distinguish between long and short vowels.[16]

> .....the term [trochaic] should be avoided because of its lack of precision: in versification based on stress it is inadvisable to use the terminology of quantitative prosody.[17]

Vekerdi suggests that rather than calling a two-syllable unit a "trochaic foot," we should call it a "disyllabic foot." Clearly the term "trochaic foot" is frequently used, and when we see it we need to remind ourselves that it does not insinuate a differentiation of duration for the syllables. The term disyllabic foot is more accurate as it does not connote something which is absent in Tibetan verse.

Five Syllables per Line

3 + 2

Only two of the *mgur* in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* (.8%) have five syllables per line, and both use the same subdivision. According to Don grub rgyal, there are two possibilities for dividing five syllables into groups, and he describes this particular one as follows:

> ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་མགོ་མ་གསུམ་མཉམ་དུ་སྦྱོར་བ་དང་། གཞུག་མ་གཉིས་ལྷན་དུ་སྒྲིག་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་ཏེ།.......[18]

> The subdivisions have three syllables and two syllables, respectively.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Mgur IV-3 and IV-7, which use this form, will be discussed in Chapter 8, because they are also examples of *mgur* with stanzas of five lines, and a large part of one is closely related to the other in language and style. Here is an excerpt from

[16] J. Vekerdi, "Some Remarks on Tibetan Prosody," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 2, nos. 2-3 (1952): 222.
[17] Vekerdi, "Some Remarks on Tibetan Prosody": 223.
[18] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 493.

Mgur IV-3, with spaces provided to indicate my subdivisions, and bold format to show the syllables that repeat in the same positions within stanzas throughout the song:

དགེ་སྦྱོར་**གྱི་** མི་རྟོག །
དད་གུས་**ཀྱི་** ཆུ་བོ**ས**། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་ བརྟན་**ཀྱང་**། །
རྣམ་གཡེང་**གི་** སེར་བ**ས**། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ བཅོམ་**ལ**། །

དགེ་སེམས་**ཀྱི་** སྨྱུ་གུ །
ལུང་རིགས་**ཀྱི་** རྡོད་**ཀྱིས**། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་ བསྒྲུངས་**ཀྱང་**། །
དཀོར་སྒྲིབ་**ཀྱི་** བ་མོ**ས**། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ ཁྲིར་**ལ**། །[19]

The first group in each line consists of three syllables, here comprised of a nominal compound and a genitive particle, or an adverb (with adverbial particle). Western theorists usually call a foot with three syllables, the first being strong and the other two weak, a "dactyl" or "dactylic foot." Following Vekerdi's suggestion again, I have chosen to call it a "trisyllabic foot."

Mgur IV-7 exhibits an additional feature: the particle that rounds off each trisyllabic foot in some of its verses is *ni*. For instance, its sixth stanza reads

འཇིགས་སྐྲག་**ནི་** དེ་འདྲ། །
དཀོན་མཆོག་**ནི་** གསུམ་གྱིས། །
ངེས་པར་**ནི་** སེལ་བས། །

[19] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 71/ 64.

སྙིང་གི་**ནི་** དཀྱིལ་ནས། །
སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་**ནི་** གྱིས་ཡ། །[20]

Ni is a particle used frequently in old Tibetan verses, such as those discovered at Dunhuang, where it also serves in the third syllable of the line to round out the first trisyllabic foot. The meaning of the line is not dependent on any translation of *ni*, though Stein and others have translated it as "oui," "oh oui," "yes," "ah yes," and so forth.[21]

There is a major difference between the usage of *ni* in most of the texts traditionally ascribed to the Period of the Early Diffusion of Buddhism, or *snga dar*, and the above usage of *ni*: the *snga dar* verses in which *ni* appears usually have six syllables per line. In fact, every example of verse that Don grub rgyal ascribes to the *snga dar* and that has a regular number of syllables per line is hexasyllabic, with *ni* in third place. Nevertheless, there are some examples of earlier texts that have a trisyllabic foot with *ni* followed by a disyllabic foot. Here is one text cited by Thomas that was discovered in a cave not far from Dunhuang that is thought to have been sealed around the same time as the latter, the early part of the eleventh century. The formatting and divisions are mine.

nyan [k]ar **ni** btsug so/
stan ka[r] **ni** rgyab bo/
pan kar **ni** btsug so
bon kar **ni** slud do / /
hin kar **ni** btsu[g so]
phan kar **ni** rgyab bo/ /[22]

Since no other form of Tibetan verse uses the particle *ni* in this way, it is clear that verses ascribed to the *snga dar* were Skal ldan rgya mtsho's model for the use of *ni* in Mgur IV-7. It is curious that he chose to employ it in the much less frequent form of five, rather than six, syllables per line.[23] Perhaps his access to this literature was

[20] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 76/ 69.
[21] R. A. Stein, *La civilisation tibétaine* (Paris: l'Asiathèque, 1987), 178-79.
[22] Thomas, *Ancient Folk-literature from North-eastern Tibet: Texts, Translations and Notes*, 66. For an additional example, see Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language*, 413.
[23] In fact, Skal ldan rgya mtsho never uses the hexasyllabic line with the divisions of two trisyllabic feet.

highly limited, and he did not realize that the particle *ni* is almost always used in a hexasyllabic line of two trisyllabic feet.[24]

Six Syllables per Line

2 + 2 + 2

In the thirteen *mgur* by Skal ldan rgya mtsho that have six syllables per line (5% of the *Mgur 'bum*), all have the disyllabic unit as their basis.[25] For example, I have construed the way Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses this meter in Mgur III-8 as follows:

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[24] Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the particle *ni* in an even more curious way in a heptasyllabic foot, which we will look at shortly.

[25] Western theorists usually say that these *mgur* are made up of trochaic or disyllabic feet, but Don grub rgyal describes this form a bit differently:

> ཚིག་བར་དྲུག་དང་ལྡན་པའི་མགུར་གྱི་ལུས། འདི་ལ་རྣམ་པ་གསུམ་མཆིས་ཏེ།
>
> 1. ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་རྣམས་སོ་སོར་ཟུང་དུ་ཀློག་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་ཏེ།.........
>
> Regarding *mgur* which have six syllables [per line], there are three types [namely]:
> 1. The syllables of a line of verse are individually read as a pair…….

His language seems obscure here. The other two solutions for subdivisions of six syllables in a line are clear. In his second point, he describes successive units of one, two and three syllables:

> 2. ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་དང་པོ་རྣམས་ཁེར་རྐྱང་དུ་གཙོད་པ་དང་། བར་མ་གཉིས་ལྷན་དུ་སྦྲེར་བ། གཞུག་མ་གསུམ་མཉམ་དུ་ཀློག་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་ ....

Finally he describes two units of three syllables each:

> 3. ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་རྣམས་སོ་སོར་གསུམ་གསུམ་དུ་སྦྲེར་བ་ཞིག་སྟེ། ....

For this, see Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 494-95.

Why is he not as straightforward as Western theorists in describing his first type as three units of two syllables? Reading through his chapter on verse, we see that he uses this type of language ("*tshig rkang gcig gi yi ge rnams so sor zung du klog pa*....") whenever he is referring to verse that Westerners would describe as trochaic. It appears that he does not explicitly say that the units are made up of two syllables because he wants to leave room for the possibility of larger units made up of multiples of two syllables, albeit randomly placed from line to line.

སངས་རྒྱས་ ཀུན་གྱི་ ངོ་བོ། །
དམ་ཆོས་ ཀུན་གྱི་ འབྱུང་གནས། །
དགེ་འདུན་ ཀུན་གྱི་ གཙུག་རྒྱན། །
བློ་བཟང་ བསྟན་པའི་ རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
སྙིང་ནས་ སྐྱབས་སུ་ བཟུང་ནས། །
རྟག་ཏུ་ གསོལ་བ་ འདེབས་སོ། །[26]

It is notable that Skal ldan rgya mtsho employs the form of the hexasyllabic line divided into three equal feet so infrequently in his *mgur*. The meter of three disyllabic feet is precisely the one found in the Central Tibetan folksong called the *gzhas*, which has been extremely popular in Central Tibet,[27] and has also been found in Western[28] and Eastern Tibet.[29]

Although the origin of the *gzhas* is unknown,[30] Sørensen believes that it is at least four or five hundred years old.[31] This would put it well within Skal ldan rgya mtsho's time, and it may already have been popular in Lhasa then. We also know that the form has been in use in Amdo, though with certainty only from the last century

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[26] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 44-45/ 40.

[27] For examples of the *gzhas* in Central Tibet, see Johan van Manen, "Three Tibetan Repartee Songs," *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, n.s., 17, no. 4 (1921); Namkhai Norbu Dewang, "Musical Tradition of the Tibetan People: Songs in Dance Measure," *Serie Orientale Roma* 36, no. 2 (1967); Jeanette Marie Snyder, "Some Popular Songs of Tibet," in *The Malahat Review*, ed. Robin Skelton (Victoria, British Columbia: University of Victoria, 1972); Geoffrey Samuel, "Music of the Lhasa Minstrels," in *Zlos-gar*, ed. Jamyang Norbu (New Delhi: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 1986); Samuel, "Songs of Lhasa"; Savitsky, "Secular Lyrical Poetry in Tibet"; Goldstein, "Lhasa Street Songs"; Tucci, *Tibetan Folk Songs from Gyantse and Western Tibet*; Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*; Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language*; and Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*.

[28] For examples of the *gzhas* in Western Tibet, see A. H. Francke, "Ladakhi Songs," *The Indian Antiquary, A Journal of Oriental Research* 31, no. 287 (1902); and Tucci, *Tibetan Folk Songs from Gyantse and Western Tibet*.

[29] For examples of *gzhas* collected in Eastern Tibet, see Duncan, *Love Songs and Proverbs of Tibet*; and Namkhai Norbu, "Musical Tradition of the Tibetan People: Songs in Dance Measure," 342-45. The *gzhas* of Part III were collected in Khams and those of Part IV were collected in Amdo. He provides notations of typical tunes from Khams and from Amdo that the *gzhas* may have been sung to or sung and danced to.

[30] The *mgur* of the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683–1706), though not folksongs, are based on this form and may have been the first of all songs that employ the *gzhas*' form to be written down.

[31] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 20.

onwards, as evidenced by the abundant examples of it in Namkhai Norbu's collection.[32] There is no indication that Skal ldan rgya mtsho recognized any popularity of the *gzhas* form in Amdo, though he may well have been aware of it in the Lhasa area. In any event, it appears that he did not perceive the *gzhas* as a form that would appeal to those he was writing for in his area of Amdo, and used it only sparsely.

Seven Syllables per Line

Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses three types of subdivisions of the seven-syllable line in his *Mgur 'bum*. I shall analyze his use of them one by one:

2 + 2 + 3

Western analysts have described this form as three and a half trochaic feet (the half foot indicating a catalexis)[33] or alternatively as three feet (the third one being dactylic).[34] Don grub rgyal describes it as follows:

> ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་མགོ་མ་བཞི་པོ་སོ་སོར་ཟུང་དུ་སྒྲིག་པ་དང་། འཕྲོ་མ་གསུམ་པོ་ལྷན་དུ་སྦྱོར་བ་སྟེ།.........[35]

[32] Namkhai Norbu, "Musical Tradition of the Tibetan People: Songs in Dance Measure," pt 4.

[33] Sørensen and others.

[34] Beyer and Helffer. Beyer points out that the last syllable in this form is considered neutral, since "Both stressed and unstressed syllables in verse final position count as bearing the same stress; there is no systematic distinction of stress in this position. Metrical symmetry suggests that syllables with neutralized stress be counted as unstressed...." See Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language*, 408. Helffer points out that she especially likes this way of subdividing the beats in the Ge sar Epic rather than the aforementioned way, since it conforms with the execution of the song. See Mireille Helffer, *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Ge sar d'après le livre de la Course de cheval: version chantée de Blo bzang bstan 'jin*, Centre de recherches d'histoire et de philologie de la IVe section de l'École pratique des hautes études. II. Hautes études orientales, 9 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1977), 428. (Henceforth referred to as *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Ge sar*.)

[35] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 496, where he provides examples.

> The four syllables at the beginning of the line of verse are separately read in pairs and the following three are joined together.....

Although Don grub rgyal's description is broader, the description of this form as two disyllabic feet followed by a trisyllabic one fits the specific features of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Mgur V-16, part of which I quote here:

རྒྱལ་བའི་ བསྟན་དང་ མཇལ་དུས་འདིར། །
དམ་ཆོས་ ཉམས་སུ་ མ་བླངས་ན། །
འཆི་ཁར་[36] འགྱོད་དོ་ ཤེས་ལྡན་ཚོ། །

མཛེས་ཤིང་ འཇམ་པའི་ གཟུགས་ཕུང་འདི། །
རྟག་ཏུ་ གནས་པར་ རེ་ན་ཡང་། །
ཁོང་རུལ་ སྟོང་པོ་ ཇེ་བཞིན་དུ། །
སྒྱུར་དུ་ འགྲོའོ་ ཤེས་ལྡན་ཚོ། །[37]

It is remarkable that only seven of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* in his *Mgur 'bum* (3%) use this form. It was used by a wide variety of writers, from Sa skya Paṇḍita to Mi la ras pa,[38] and is also the predominant meter in the Ge sar Epic.[39] It is the most frequent meter

[36] *khar* ABD; *bar* C.

[37] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 112-13/ 101.

[38] Any reference I make in this book to Mi la ras pa's style is unfortunately only a reference to his style as portrayed in Gtsang smyon's late fifteenth century compilation of Mi la ras pa's *Mgur 'bum*.

[39] For examples of this meter, see Pavel Poucha, "Le vers tibétain," *Archiv Orientální: Journal of the Czechoslovak Oriental Institute* 18.4 (1950): 192, 194-95, 196-202, 210, 211, and 213-14; and Vekerdi, "Some Remarks on Tibetan Prosody," 223, both of which deal with classical verse; Helffer, *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Ge sar*, 428, which deals with the Ge sar epic; R. A. Stein, *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, Bibliothèque de l'Institut des hautes études chinoises 13 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959), 501-504, which deals with the Ge sar epic and with Mi la ras pa; Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 268-70, and Beyer, *The Classical Tibetan Language*, 410, which deal with Sa skya Paṇḍita; Kvaerne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*, in which three of the *dohā*s are in this meter; Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 470-85, 496, which has examples of this meter from various styles of *mgur*, including an extensive section on Mi la ras pa; and Margret Causemann, ed., trans., *Volksliteratur tibetischer Nomaden; Lieder und Erzählungen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag., 1993), in which most of the songs from Khams use this meter.

in classical Tibetan verse, as the myriad examples in P. Poucha's article, "Le vers tibétain" demonstrate. It is also the one used most often in a collection of nomad songs from Khams collected by M. Causemann.[40] The movement away from predominantly trisyllabic feet in verse ascribed to the *snga dar*, to this entirely new form based on disyllabic units after the "Period of Darkness," was a revolution in itself.

The fact that Mi la ras pa was such a major source of inspiration to Skal ldan rgya mtsho cannot be denied. Therefore it is very curious that only three per cent of the *mgur* in the latter's *Mgur 'bum* employ the meter of Mi la ras pa. I can only imagine that Skal ldan rgya mtsho showed little interest in it because he preferred the meters that he knew would speak directly to the people in his part of Amdo.

3 + 2 + 2

There is only one *mgur* from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* (.4%) that illustrates this meter,[41] Mgur V-2, from which the following is an excerpt:

བླ་མ་དང་ དཀོན་མཆོག་ དྲིན་ལས། །
རོང་འབྲོག་གི་ ས་ཆ་ གར་ཡང་། །
བཟའ་བཏུང་དང་ ལྷོ་གོས་ སྐྱིད་བྱུང་། །
གར་ཕྱིན་ཡང་ ཕ་ཡུལ་ ཡིན་འདུག །

ལྷ་ཆོས་ལ་ འབད་ལོ་ བྱས་འདིས། །
མི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ འདུན་མ་ འགྲུབ་པོ། །

[40] Causemann, *Volksliteratur tibetischer Nomaden: Lieder und Erzählungen.*
[41] Don grub rgyal describes it in his second example in *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 495-96.

མི་ཆོས་ལ་ འབད་འབུངས་ བརྟོན་ཀྱང་། །

ལྷ་ཆོས་ལ་ འགྲུབ་ངེས་ མེད་དོ། །[42]

Not only does this *mgur* have a very distinctive meter for Skal ldan rgya mtsho, but it also has highly personal subject matter—how the practice of religion has not been fruitful enough for himself and others.

2 + 3 + 2

The final group of subdivisions of the heptasyllabic line that I will discuss is described by Don grub rgyal as follows:

> ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་མགོ་མ་གཉིས་དང་གཞུག་མ་གཉིས་སོ་སོར་ཟུང་དུ་སྒྲིག་པ་དང་། བར་མ་གསུམ་པོ་ལྷན་དུ་སྦྱོར་བ་སྟེ་........[43]
>
> The two syllables at the beginning and the two syllables at the end of a verse-line are individually read as pairs, and the middle three are joined together.....

The following is an excerpt from Mgur VII-17, illustrating what Skal ldan rgya mtsho does with this very unusual meter that he uses in only 1% of the *Mgur 'bum*:

ཇོན་པ་ ཁྲི་ཁྲིད་**ཉི་** སླེབས་[44] བྱུང་། །

ཤ་བ་ སྨུག་པོ་**ཉི་** འགྲོས་སོ། །

ཛ་རི་ མཐོན་པོ་**ཉི་** བཟང་ངོ་། །

ང་རྒྱལ་ སེང་གེ་**ཉི་** སླེབས་[45] བྱུང་། །

ཡོན་ཏན་ རི་བོང་**ཉི་** འགྲོས་སོ། །

ཁེངས་སྐྱུངས་[46] བྲག་ཕུག་**ཉི་** བཟང་ངོ་། །[47]

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42 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 90/ 81.

43 Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 496.

44 *slebs* CD; *sleb* AB.

45 *slebs* CD; *sleb* AB.

46 *khengs* BCD; *kheng* A; *skyungs* ACD; *bskyungs* B.

47 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 160/ 142.

He completes the middle foot consistently with the particle *ni*, a real anomaly. On the one hand, his use of *ni* is a throwback to its use to complete trisyllabic feet in verse ascribed to the *snga dar*. On the other hand, the use of *ni* in a hexasyllabic line is not found in any known verses of that period with the same number of syllables per line.

Here is another example of the same meter, the homage to Mgur X-9:

འཕགས་པ་	ཀླུ་སྒྲུབ་ནི་	ཡབ་སྲས། །
མཉམ་མེད་	བློ་བཟང་གི་	གྲགས་པ། །
བློ་བཟང་	ཆོས་ཀྱི་ནི་	རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
གསོལ་བ་	སྙིང་ནས་རང་	འདེབས་སོ། །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་	ལྕགས་ཀྱུ་ཡིས་	དྲོངས་ཤིག །[48]

It seems as if Skal ldan rgya mtsho is trying hard to experiment with this meter, because the first four lines are essentially three disyllabic feet with an unnecessary particle thrown in (*ni* or genitive) to make up the extra beat. The fifth line above is more successful.

I have no further information about this meter, and perhaps other poets found it as hard to use as Skal ldan rgya mtsho did.[49]

Eight Syllables per Line

The distribution of *mgur* over the range of various numbers of syllables per line and their subdivisions can be seen in the table below, arranged in descending order of frequency:

---

48 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 223/ 196.

49 Yet another possible way to subdivide a seven syllable line is with a catalexis in its first foot. *Bod kyi la gzhas gzhon nu 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1987) is a large collection of *la gzhas* from Amdo. Many of the *la gzhas* there use this meter, often in the form 1 + 2 + 2 + 2. It is interesting that Skal ldan rgya mtsho does not use it. However, he does use another eight syllable pattern found in this collection, 1 + 2 + 2 + 3, which will be discussed shortly.

Same number of syllables per line
94.5%

Syllables per line	Subdivisions	Number of *mgur*	Percentage of total
8	1 + 2 + 2 + 3	137	54%
8	3 + 2 + 3	34	13%
9	2 + 2 + 2 + 3	26	10%
6	2 + 2 + 2	13	5%
8	2 + 2 + 2 + 2	10	4%
7	2 + 2 + 3	6 or 7	3%
7	2 + 3 + 2	3	1%
5	3 + 2	2	.8%
8	2 + 3 + 3	1	.4%
8	2 + 1 + 2 + 3	1	.4%
4	2 + 2 and 4	1	.4%
7	3 + 2 + 2	1	.4%
10	2 + 3 + 2 + 3	1	.4%
10	2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2	1	.4%

Clearly, the eight-syllable line is the favored one, and the first two examples above together comprise 67% of all of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum*. Most favored is the first meter listed above, which is used at least four times as often, and usually vastly more often, than any other meter employed by Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

1 + 2 + 2 + 3

Here is an example from Mgur IV-1d, from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's conversations with the bees:

ངས་བླ་མ་བརྒྱ་ཡི་ཞལ་མཐོང་ཡང་། །
ཆོས་དེ་ལས་ཟབ་པ་ངས་མ་ཐོས། །

ཁྲིད་བདེན་ནོ་བདེན་ནོ་སྨྲང་མ་བདེན། །
ད་མི་མགོ་མི་སྐོར་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད། །[50]

While scholars have disagreed about how to classify two strong beats together[51] (such as the first two syllables in each line above), they have frequently found the phenomenon something to remark upon. Don grub rgyal refers to a catalexis at the beginning of a verse line in the following ways:

ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་མགོ་མ་རྣམས་ཁེར་རྐྱང་དུ་གཅོད་པ་........[52]

and

ཚིག་རྐང་གཅིག་གི་ཡི་གེ་དང་པོ་རྣམས་ཁེར་རྐྱང་དུ་གཅོད་པ་.........[53]

> The syllables at the beginning of the lines are cut off by themselves.

Isolating the first syllable renders my divisions of the excerpt above as follows:

ངས་	བླ་མ་	བརྒྱ་ཡི་	ཞལ་མཐོང་ཡང་། ।
ཆོས་	དེ་ལས་	ཟབ་པ་	ངས་མ་ཐོས། ।

ཁྲིད་	བདེན་ནོ་	བདེན་ནོ་	སྨྲང་མ་བདེན། ।
ད་	མི་མགོ་	མི་སྐོར་	གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད། ।

[50] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 67/ 60.

[51] Beyer gives numerous examples of catalexis in *The Classical Tibetan Language*, 414-17. See especially p. 414, since his examples (from Mi la ras pa and Pad ma dkar po) involve the very meter I am describing above.

Vekerdi would not recognize that the first syllable is an incomplete foot since it is "an integral part of the line," and calls the meter 3 + 2 + 3. See Vekerdi, "Some Remarks on Tibetan Prosody," 230.

Helffer comments that experts (Roerich, 1952, 14 and Vekerdi) do not agree about this point in *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Ge sar*, 427.

Sørensen seems to describe the above meter as consisting of "an initial metrically weak (unaccented) syllable (*ya gcig*), followed by ....three and a half trochaic *feet (cha gsum dang ya gcig)*." Why he thinks of the first syllable as "metrically weak" is not clear. See Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 14.

[52] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 496.

[53] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 500.

While the meter above seems related visually to the meter containing three and a half feet, it must have quite a different feel when sung or heard because of the strong first beat.

How can we explain Skal ldan rgya mtsho's extensive use of this meter? What follows is a possible response to this query. I will turn directly to a type of folksong called the "*glu*" (or "*dmangs glu*")[54] because it often has eight syllables per line[55] in the very meter discussed above, and has been popular in Amdo.[56] Don grub rgyal's example of a *glu* is based on the meter 1 + 2 + 2 + 3, the first line being a variant. The divisions are mine:

འབྲུག་སིང་སིང་སིང་ཞིག་ དགུང་ནས་གྲགས། །
ཆར་ བསིལ་མ་ འབབ་པའི་ རྟེན་འབྲེལ་རེད། །
ངས་ ཡང་ཡང་ གྲགས་པའི་ སྨོན་ལམ་འདེབས། །

བྱ་སིང་སིང་སིང་ཞིག་ ནགས་ནས་གྲགས། །
ནགས་ སིལ་ཏོག་ ཟ་བའི་ རྟེན་འབྲེལ་རེད། །
ངས་ ཡང་ཡང་ གྲགས་པའི་ སྨོན་ལམ་འདེབས། །

གླུ་སིང་སིང་སིང་ཞིག་ ཁྲོམ་ནས་གླངས། །
ཆང་ བདུད་རྩི་ འཐུང་གི་ རྟེན་འབྲེལ་རེད། །
ངས་ ཡང་ཡང་ འཐུང་གི་ སྨོན་ལམ་འདེབས། །
ཞེས་པ་ལྟ་བུའོ།[57]

Concerning the *glu* Sørensen writes the following:

> The designation *glu* is the most common term for folksongs throughout Tibet and is applicable to a variety of special sub-types of songs. But the term is in particular used in mDo smad, i.e. Khams of East-Tibet as the prevailing term for songs of folk origin..... The texts (*glu tshig*) of *glu* songs are sung or recited in

[54] The *glu* is a major branch of Tibetan folksongs; another one is the *gzhas*, already discussed. See Namkhai Norbu, "Musical Tradition of the Tibetan People: Songs in Dance Measure," 207-8; and Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 18.

[55] Sørensen says that they have five to nine syllables per line. See *Divinity Secularized*, 18. But the examples that Don grub rgyal shows have seven or eight.

[56] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 18. This meter is also sometimes found in classical Tibetan verse. See, for example, Poucha, "Le vers tibétain" (1950): 214-15.

[57] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 335.

> connection with major festivals and ceremonies..... such as in connection with public religious gatherings (*chos glu*), nuptial ceremonies...., at sportive horse-racing ....dancing...., picnic..... or at occasions such as public or private entertainment .....and parties where e.g. drinking songs (*chang glu*) are sung, etc.[58]

Namkhai Norbu tells us that the *glu* has seven or eight syllables per line, and that it is sung "by horsemen, or two-sided singing contest, or debate."[59]

Don grub rgyal writes that a form of the *glu* called the *glu shogs* was very widespread in Amdo. His example again uses the meter we are discussing. Again, the divisions are my own:

ང་	ལུག་རྫི	ཐང་ན་	ཡོད་ཡོད་ལ། ।
སྐྱུང་	དར་མ་	ཀན་ཚོའི་	ངར་ལ་ལྟོས། ।
ང་	ལུག་རྫི་	ཐང་ན་	མེད་ཀྱི་ན། ।
དེས་	མ་རྐན་	འགའ་རེ་	གསོད་རྩིས་རེད། ।
ང་	གླུ་བ་	ཁྲོམ་ན་	ཡོད་ཡོད་ལ། ।
ཡང་	སུག་ལབ་	ཀན་ཚོའི་	ངར་ལ་ལྟས[60]། ।
ང་	གླུ་བ་	ཁྲོམ་ན་	མེད་ཀྱི་ན། ।
དེས་	གླུ་ཤགས་	འགའ་རེ་	ལེན་རྩིས་རེད། ।

ཅེས་པ་ལྟ་བུ།.......[61]

Concerning the *glu shags*, Sørensen writes:

> As a pendant to the Central Tibetan *tshig rgyag* type of repartee song, this East Tibetan *glu shags* type of song is an extremely popular form of alternate sarcastic songs aiming at teasing (*glu shags rgyag pa*) a counterpart with words, often traded in regular song competition on wits, as e.g. a mating banter between the two sexes or as a bout of social criticism. These

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[58] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 18.

[59] Namkhai Norbu, "Musical Tradition of the Tibetan People: Songs in Dance Measure," 207.

[60] I am reading *ltos* here, as in the stanza above, after consultation with the Rong bo scholar Blo bzang chos grags.

[61] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 335-36.

> songs evince a metrical structure identical to the cognate *glu* of which it may also be considered a sub-type.[62]

Don grub rgyal provides us with two examples of a subtype of *glu* called the *la gzhas*, a genre of song that I will discuss in Chapter 8 with regard to stanza patterns. The first has seven beats per line and is in the meter 1 + 2 + 2 + 2. I quote the second below, with my divisions. It has the meter we are discussing, 1 + 2 + 2 + 3:

ཁྲོད་ གོས་ཆེན་ གོ་[63]བ་ མིང་ཆེ་གི །
ང་ དངུལ་དཀར་ སྒྲོག་གུ་ འབྲུ་ཆུང་གི །
འབྲུ་ ཆུང་རུང་ སྒྲོག་གུ་ སྒྲོགས་དགོས་གི །
སྒྲོགས་ ཟེན་ན་ བསེར་བུ་ ཁོག་དགོས་གི །

ཁྲོད་ མ་བཟང་ བུ་མོ་ མྱིང་ཆེ་གི །
ང་ ཕ་བཟང་ བྱི་ལི་ དོན་ཆུང་གི །
དོན་ ཆུང་རུང་ རོགས་ལ་ རྗེ་དགོས་གི །
རྗེ་ བདང་ན་ ཛ་མ་ སྐྱོང་དགོས་གི །

ཞེས་པ་ལྷ་བུའོ།[64]

Sørensen also tells us about the *la gzhas*:

> The mountain songs or rather 'pass-songs' (*la gzhas*) are also designated *ri glu*. This East Tibetan type is in fact the form used for what we may call love songs. The lyrics is exclusively devoted the usual themes of love between man and woman. The lyrics is full of amorous sentiments exchanged between lovers (*rogs dran pa*), on mutual harmony (*zhe mthun pa*), on recollection of the lover (*rogs dran pa*) as well as theme on lovelornness when being separated (*kha bral ba*) etc.[65]

Bod kyi la gzhas gzhon nu 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu is a large collection of *la gzhas* from Amdo. While the majority of meters in this

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[62] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 18.
[63] I am reading *gong* instead of *go* here, after consulting with Blo bzang chos grags—(*gong ba = collar).*
[64] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 337.
[65] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 19.

collection are seven syllables with a catalexis, 1 + 2 + 2 + 2, there are also frequent examples of the related eight-syllable meter, 1 + 2 + 2 + 3.

Besides having similarities in general to the *glu* and especially to various of the sub-types of *glu* such as the *glu gshags* and the *la gzhas*, the songs of Skal ldan rgya mtsho in this meter resemble some nomad songs. While the bulk of songs in Causemann's collection have a meter of 2 + 2 + 3, some also have the very meter we have been discussing.[66]

3 + 2 + 3

Though only used a fourth as much as the meter 1 + 2 + 2 + 3, this is the second most widely used meter by Skal ldan rgya mtsho. Here is an excerpt from Mgur VI-4 with my subdivisions:

བླ་མ་ལ་	གདམས་ངག་	གང་འདོད་ཞུས། །
གདམས་ངག་གིས་	གཞན་ལ་	ཕན་ཡང་བཏགས། །
རང་ཉིད་ལ་	ཉམས་རྟོགས་	མ་ཤར་ཡང་། །
དབེན་གནས་སུ་	སེམས་ལ་	ལྷོད་མོ་བལྷས། །[67]

This meter is found in classical Tibetan verse,[68] where it is the most frequent example of a meter that begins with a trisyllabic foot.[69] But it was by no means confined to classical verse, as evidenced by examples found in the *mgur* attributed to Mi la ras pa.[70]

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66 Causemann, *Volksliteratur tibetischer Nomaden: Lieder und Erzählungen.*

67 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 127/ 113.

68 See, for example, Poucha, "Le vers tibétain" (1950): 210.

69 Vekerdi, "Some Remarks on Tibetan Prosody," 230.

70 Beyer gives examples of the usage of meter 3 + 2 + 3, in which Mi la ras pa combines it with another meter. See *The Classical Tibetan Language*, 418.

2 + 2 + 2 + 2

Only ten *mgur* in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* (4%) use this meter. Here is an excerpt from Mgur IV-8, which we will examine in my section on interjections:

འོ་འོ་ ཕ་རྒོད་ བློ་བཟང་ གྲགས་པ། །
ཨའུ་ གདན་གྱི་ སྐྱབས་གནས་ ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ སྙིང་ནས་ གུས་པས་ འདུད་དང་། །
ཏེ་ཏེ་ བློ་བདེ་ དཔལ་ཡིན་ ཨེ་གོ་ །
ཡ་ཡི་ ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་ བྱང་ཆུབ་ ལམ་གྱི་ རིམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་ ཆོས་ཀྱི་ ཉིང་ཁུ་ ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ ཚུལ་བཞིན་ ཉམས་སུ་ ལོངས་དང་། །
ཏེ་ཏེ་ བློ་བདེ་ དཔལ་ཡིན་ ཨེ་གོ་ །
ཡ་ཡི་ ཡ་ཡི། །[71]

This is an unusual meter, and it is probably no accident that Skal ldan rgya mtsho used it for a very unusual song.

2 + 3 + 3

Only one *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's (.4%) uses this meter. Here is an excerpt from Mgur XII-8:

དམ་པའི་ ལྷ་ཆོས་ལ་ ཉིན་མཚན་དུ། །
བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ བགྱིད་པ་རུ་ བླ་མ་མཁྱེན། །
མི་རྟག་ འཆི་བ་ནི་ བང་རེ་མགྱོགས། །
ངན་སོང་ སྡུག་བསྔལ་འདི་ གདིང་རེ་ཟབ། །[72]

[71] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 77/ 69.
[72] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 303/ 269.

2 + 1 + 2 + 3

Here is an excerpt from Mgur VI-7, which is translated in full in the appendix. This unusual meter occurs only once in the *Mgur 'bum.*

ཤེས་རབ་ ཁྱོད་ ཉལ་ནས་ འདུག་ཡོད་དམ། །
འདོད་ཆགས་ ཁོ་ སྐྱ་སྐྱོད་ ཇེ་རྫིང་རེད། །

མི་སྡུག་ ཁྱོད་ གང་གི་ འདམ་དུ་འཁྱིལ། །
ཞེ་སྡང་ ཁོ་ སྐྱ་བརྗིད་ ཇེ་ཆེ་རེད། །

བྱམས་པ་ ཁྱོད་ ས་ཆ་ གང་དུ་བྲོས། །
ང་རྒྱལ་ ཁོ་ ངར་སྐད་ ཇེ་ཆེ་རེད། །[73]

Nine Syllables per Line

2 + 2 + 2 + 3

Twenty-six *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* (10%) use this meter. Here is an excerpt from the opening *mgur*, I-1, a large eulogy to the Buddha, his Indian successors, and the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa lamas:

བསྟན་པའི་ བདག་པོ་ སྟོན་པ་ སངས་རྒྱས་དང་། །
རྒྱལ་བ་ བྱམས་མགོན་ ཐོགས་མེད་ དབྱིག་གི་གཉེན། །
འཕགས་པ་ གྲོལ་སྡེ་ བཙུན་པ་ རྣམ་གྲོལ་སྡེ། །
གསོལ་བ་ འདེབས་སོ་ ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ ལྕགས་ཀྱུས་བཟུངས། །[74]

This meter was extremely prominent in classical Tibetan verse, second only to the seven beat 2 + 2 + 3. For this reason, Skal ldan rgya mtsho surely used it intentionally for almost all the homages to the people he admired extensively,[75] and for the final *mgur* in the collection. These *mgur* show other influences from classical verse as well.

[73] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 130/ 115-16.
[74] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 1/ 1. Larger subdivisions could be construed here as well, such as 4 + 5.
[75] I will discuss this group of songs in Chapter 8, in terms of quatrains.

On the other hand, Skal ldan rgya mtsho also used this meter in another way, as exemplified by this excerpt from Mgur III-1:

ཟས་ནོར་ བསོད་ནམས་ ཆོས་ཀྱི་ བར་ཆད་ཡིན། །
འདོད་རྒྱང་ ཆོག་ཤེས་ གྲིས་དང་ རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

གྲོགས་ངན་ བསྙེན་ན་ རང་ཡང་ ཇི་ངན་འགྲོ་ །
རྟག་ཏུ་ གཅིག་པུར་ སྡོད་དང་ རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །[76]

Disyllabic meters with an odd number of syllables per line were frequently used to make Tibetan translations of the Indian siddhas' mystic songs, the *dohā*s, that I have already discussed. In particular, the very meter portrayed above seems to have been popular,[77] so it makes sense that Skal ldan rgya mtsho would have chosen it to sing of the benefits of renunciation and solitude.

Ten Syllables per Line

I will show two meters here, each of which is found in only one *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* (.4% each).

2 + 3 + 2 + 3

Mgur XII-18 has this meter:

བླ་མ་ སངས་རྒྱས་དེ་ འབྲལ་མེད་ སྤྱི་བོར་བཞུགས། །
བྱིན་རླབས་ དངོས་གྲུབ་དེ་ ད་ལྟ་ རང་ནས་སྨོལ། །

[76] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 33/ 30.

[77] See, for example, Kvaerne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*, for translations by the late thirteenth century Yar klungs lo tsā ba Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1242–1346) from Old Bengali, and/or other old Indian dialects, into Tibetan. Over half of the 47 *dohā*s in the collection have the meter I am discussing. The predominant meters (with some variations of subdivision) of all the songs are disyllabic and have an odd number of syllables per line:

26 are in predominantly 4 1/2 feet,
8 are in predominantly 5 1/2 feet,
1 is in predominantly 6 1/2 feet,
4 are in predominantly 3 1/2 feet, and
8 are variable, though still usually disyllabic.

བློ་ཕྱུགས་ གཏོད་ས་དེ་ སྒོམ་སྒྲུབ་ ཟབ་མོ་བཟང་། །
བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ ཆུ་རྒྱུན་དེ་ དེང་ནས་ རྒྱུན་མ་གཅོད། །[78]

After this introduction, the song reverts to several unusually long sentences, which are long lists of reasons why Skal ldan rgya mtsho is telling himself that he should help others through good discourse. The lengths of each line accentuate the length of the sentences, and the unusual features of the sentence lengths and the meter go hand in hand.

2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2

Here is an excerpt from Mgur XII-20:

དམ་ཆོས་ གང་ཡིན་ མི་ཤེས་ ཆོས་དཔོན་ བླ་མ།
ཆོས་དང་ ཞི་རྒྱུད་ ཤར་གྱི་ ཕྱོགས་སུ་ བཞག་ནས། །
ཇུར་གཅོད་ ཡང་ཡང་ ནུབ་ཀྱི་ ཕྱོགས་སུ་ བྱེད་པའི། །
ཆོས་བཤད་ འདི་ལ་ སྐྱུག་ཆེ་ མི་གཏོང་ བར་ཞུ། །[79]

The heaviness of the length of the lines and the regularity of the strong accents further emphasize Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s displeasure at the oppressive problems that he sees.

In this chapter, I have shown that Skal ldan rgya mtsho employed a wide variety of meters in singing his *mgur*. On the one hand, we have seen that he is skilled in one of the traditional meters of classical Tibetan monastic verse (2 + 2 + 2 + 3), which he uses for such formal topics as eulogies. On the other, most of his meters are those found in folk songs.

The fact that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses classical meters[80] in only 13% of the *mgur* in the *Mgur ’bum*, shows a preponderance of folk influence. He may well have sung his *mgur* in folk melodies, a

[78] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 320/ 284.
[79] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 322/ 286.
[80] Here I am including 2 + 2 + 3 (which 3% of his *mgur* employ), also a frequently used meter in classical Tibetan verse, second to the one listed above. But once again I caution the reader that this meter was not exclusive to classical prosody, and was also used extensively by Mi la ras pa.

hypothesis which I will explore further in my coda on how his *mgur* are sung today. But first I will continue to examine aspects of his style by turning to his use of stanza patterns.

CHAPTER EIGHT

STANZA PATTERNS

Now that we have looked at Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of metrics, I will turn to another form of rhythm found in verse, stanza patterns. Like metrics, these also play a pivotal role in the structure of a *mgur* and in the formation of its character, since syntax and sentence lengths are dependent upon them. The notion of stanza (*sho lo ka*) clearly exists in Tibet.[1] But in a Tibetan text, since lines of verse just follow one another as they fit across the page, stanza patterns are not immediately perceptible the way meters are. It is sometimes necessary to read a *mgur* carefully in order to group the lines into stanzas, giving each stanza a distinct idea, and the groupings can be arbitrary when the stanza patterns are irregular. At other times there are repetitions in corresponding places from stanza to stanza, or stanza external repetition, that allow one to identify the stanza patterns definitively and quickly. The notion of stanza has not been dealt with in detail by most Western theorists,[2] exceptions being P. Poucha, who made an inquiry into stanza in Tibetan classical verse, and a number of ethnomusicologists, who have studied stanzas in relation to popular song. Their interest is sparked by the frequent coexistence of repetition or variation of a melody (and sometimes a sequence of dance steps) with regular stanza lengths.[3]

---

[1] Don grub rgyal makes frequent references to *sho lo ka* (Tibetanized version of Sanskrit, *śloka*). For instance, *sho lo ka gcig la tshig rkang drug yod de....*, "The stanza which has six lines....." See *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 433. In the course of his description of *mgur*, he gives examples of stanzas with various numbers of lines.

[2] P. Poucha has gone to length to show examples of various numbers of syllables per line in stanzas consisting of various numbers of lines (two through nine), and has ranked them according to frequency. See Pavel Poucha, "Le vers tibétain," (1950): 235 and "Le vers tibétain," *Archiv Orientální: Journal of the Czechoslovak Oriental Institute* 22.4 (1954): 578.

The quatrain has received the most attention. For what some Western analysts have written about the quatrain, please see footnote 17.

[3] Giuseppe Tucci, comp., trans., *Tibetan Folk Songs from Gyantse and Western Tibet*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1966), 16; Peter Crossley-Holland, "Form and Style in Tibetan Folksong Melody," in *Jahrbuch für musikalische Volks-und-Völker-Kunde*, ed. Fritz Bose (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1967), 12; and Helffer, *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Ge sar*, 450-59.

Many of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* do not have a regular number of lines per sentence and are written in free form, in which there is no attempt to create a feeling of the pulse or rhythm in the number of lines from stanza to stanza. Besides those written in free form, at least a quarter of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs have stanzas that form patterns from five to two lines,[4] and it is these that I will examine below. The extent to which he used different stanza lengths varied greatly. He tended to use some of the forms in particular ways, and what's more, he sometimes chose a particular form for the particular type of statement he wanted to make.

In this chapter, I will show examples of poems whose stanza lengths form particular patterns, many of which exhibit stanza external repetition. I shall emphasize the repetitions by formatting them in bold, so that the reader can quickly see what syllables are repeated in the same positions within stanzas, both in the Tibetan verses and their translations. Unusual stanza lengths are often accompanied by other unique features of style and/or theme. This leads me to hypothesize that Skal ldan rgya mtsho was not only experimenting with unusual stanza lengths but also with discrete ways of writing songs. The variety of his *mgur* in this regard is yet another demonstration of the enthusiasm and ability that enabled him to write in many styles.

Stanzas of Four Lines

Among the *mgur* that I have identified as exhibiting some pattern of stanza, over half of them have four lines, or predominately four lines, for every stanza. Mgur XI-15 is an example of such a *mgur*, and I quote an excerpt from it below:

དྲིན་ཅན་གྱི་བླ་མ་སངས་རྒྱས་སུ། །
ཡིད་ཆེས་ཀྱི་དད་པས་མི་བསྙེན་པར། །

[4] It is beyond the scope of my book to provide exact percentages of his songs that are written in these respective ways, since it would involve a careful reading of every song in the *Mgur 'bum*.

བྱིན་རླབས་དང་ཡོན་ཏན་རེ་བ་དེ། །
ས་བོན་ནི་མེད་པའི་ལོ་ཐོག་[5]**འདྲ**། །

དལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་མི་ལུས་ཐོབ་དུས་འདིར། །
དམ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་སྙིང་པོ་མི་ལེན་པ། །
རིན་ཆེན་གྱི་གླིང་སོང་ཚོང་པ་རྣམས། །
ལག་སྟོང་དུ་རང་ཡུལ་འགྲོ་དང་**འདྲ**། །[6]
etc.

The hope of blessings and qualities
Without relying with the faith of belief
On a benevolent lama and the Buddha
Is like a crop which has no seeds.

Not receiving the essence through the holy religion
In this time of obtaining a human body of leisure support
Is like merchants who had gone to an island of jewels
Going [back] to their homeland empty-handed.
etc.

In the above verses, the sentences are all the same length and the finite verb *'dra*, "to be like," is repeated at the end of the fourth line. These consistencies complement the succession of discrete ideas, each involving a comparison, and further emphasize the four-line pulse.

Like the example above, many of the *mgur* that have strict or near strict sentence lengths of four lines have some repetition from stanza to stanza. This may range from the repetition of a word or words in corresponding lines to the repetition of whole lines. Mgur VII-3 shows more extensive repetition than the example above, its repetition involving three lines for every stanza:

སྒོམ་པ་ཁོ་བོ་སྒྲོད་**ས**། །
རི་སུལ་བྲག་ཤུག་སྟོང་པ། །

[5] *thog* AB; *tog* CD.
[6] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 271/ 240.

> **དེང་སང་**བྲ་བྱིས་འཕྲོག་པའི། །
> ཚུལ་འདིས་**སྣང་བ་སྐྱོ་བ**། །
>
> **སྒོམ་པ་ཁོ་བོ**་འཆག[7]ས། །
> ཡིད་འོང་སྤང་ལྗོངས་ཉམས་དགའ། །
> **དེང་སང་**རི་དྭགས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས[8]། །
> བཟུང་བས་**སྣང་བ་སྐྱོ་བ**། །[9]
> etc.
>
> **Because the sites where I, the one in contemplation**,
> dwell,
> Empty caves in mountains,
> **These days** have been deprived
> Because of the marmots and rats—**Oh sorrow!**
>
> **Because the sites which I, the one in contemplation**, tread,
> Engaging, cheerful grassy meadows,
> **These days** have been taken over
> By the wild animals—**Oh sorrow!**
> etc.

Such extensive repetition continues throughout the poem, and further emphasizes the regularity of four-line units, each expressing some loss Skal ldan rgya mtsho notices about his retreats and how he feels about it. Listening to a song like this, once one recognizes what is the same from stanza to stanza, what is different seems more dramatic. And the way a singer fills in the blank spots, while still maintaining the stanzaic framework and meter and expressing something meaningful, often ad libbing, adds great charm to a *mgur*.

Interestingly, from among the five forms of Ladakhi songs that A. H. Francke collected towards the turn of the twentieth century in Ladakh, it is the dance songs that have patterns of repetition, which he calls "parallelism" or "rhyme of sentence" and describes as "two or more sentences .....constructed accordingly, and in the

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[7] *'chag* CD; *chags* A; *'chags* B.
[8] *kyis* ABC; *tshogs* D.
[9] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 139-40/ 123-24.

corresponding places different words are inserted."[10] This is exactly the way in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses repetition.

Such repetition also occurs plentifully in the *la gzhas*, or mountain songs of eastern Tibet. Here is just one example, with the words that are repeated from stanza to stanza formatted in bold:

མཁར་ལྷ་ཁང་གསེར་ཕྲུ་པད་རྒྱན་**ཅན།** །
དེའི་ནང་ན་ལྷ་སྐུ་རྟེན་གསུམ་**བཞུགས།** །
གླུ་མང་མ་**སེམས་རྩེ་ཧེ་སྐྱིད་ཤོག** །
ཆོས་སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པ་ཡར་དར་**ཤོག** །

སྤྲི་རི་ལུ་གསེར་གྱི་གུང་[11] ཤིང་**ཅན།** །
དེའི་ནང་ལ་མ་སྤྲུ་གཞིས་འཛིན་**བཞུགས།** །
མ་སྤྲུ་ཡི་**སེམས་རྩེ་ཧེ་སྐྱིད་ཤོག** །
དཀར་འོ་མ་རྒྱུན་ཆད་མེད་པར་**ཤོག** །[12]

We already discussed *la gzhas* in Chapter 7, where I hypothesized that a meter that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses frequently (1 + 2 + 2 + 3, precisely the meter here) may have connections with the folksongs in his area.

Mgur VII-5 is an example in which the last two lines are repeated in full:

[10] Francke identifies songs that have this kind of repetition as dance songs, which he says are essentially "unsophisticated" songs that can have either religious or lay themes, and are sung in the local dialect. He gives six examples of them: numbers 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10. See A. H. Francke, *Ladakhi Songs* (Leh: 1899), 12-31.

The importance of the repetition of syllables in the same positions within stanzas in Tibetan verse seems to have been overlooked by almost all other Western writers. L. S. Savitsky writes of its importance in his article "Secular Lyrical Poetry in Tibet: Works of Tsangjang-jamtsho (1683–1706)," in *Proceedings of the Csoma de Korös Memorial Symposium*, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), 407. (Henceforth referred to as "Secular Lyrical Poetry in Tibet.") Yet he does not deal with repetition from stanza to stanza, as each quatrain of the Sixth Dalai Lama stands by itself. P. van Heurck's treatment of repetition is also confined to repetitions within a single stanza, as he is also analyzing the poems of the Sixth Dalai Lama. See Philippe van Heurck, *Chants* attribués à Tsang Yang Gyatso, sixième Dalai Lama (Rikon-Zürich: Tibet-Institut, 1984).

[11] This may be a misprint for *gur*, according to the Rong bo scholar Blo bzang chos grags.

[12] Spen pa Chos grags, comp., *Sde dge'i dmangs glu* (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986), 6.

སྔོན་བླ་མ་བཞུགས་དུས་དད་པ་མེད། །
ད་དད་པ་སྐྱེས་ཚེ་བླ་མ་[13] བྱོན། །
དེ་གཉིས་ཀ་འཛོམ་པའི་དུས་མ་བྱུང་། །
བདག་འདི་རུ་མི་སྡོད་རི་ལ་འགྲོ །

སྔོན་ཆོས་མི་ཤེས་དུས་ཉམས་ལེན་འདོད། །
ད་དམ་ཆོས་ཤེས་ཚེ་ཉམས་ལེན་བརྗེད། །
དེ་གཉིས་ཀ་འཛོམ་པའི་དུས་མ་བྱུང་། །
བདག་འདི་རུ་མི་སྡོད་རི་ལ་འགྲོ །[14]
etc.

Before, when the lama lived, [I] had no faith.
Now at the time that faith has been born, a lama has not appeared.
The time of those two coming together has not occurred.
I won't stay here. [I]'m going to the mountains.

Before, when [I] didn't understand religion, [I] wanted to practice it.
Now at the time that [I] understand religion, [I] have forgotten to practice it.
The time of those two coming together has not occurred.
I won't stay here. [I]'m going to the mountains.
etc.

Each stanza in this *mgur* includes a couplet in which a comparison is drawn between before and now, followed by a couplet in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho states his intention to get out of his present regrettable situation and go to the mountains.

In the example cited above, the repetition of full lines comes at the end of each stanza. While this format is more frequent, in some cases the repeated line comes at the beginning of each stanza. Mgur IV-1c, which I discussed in Chapter 6, is an example of this. In the segment I quote below, bees are contesting what Skal ldan rgya mtsho said of them (that their human speech was a bad omen). They repeat it back

13 *bla ma ma byon*, against all readings in ABCD: *bla ma byon*.
14 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 142-43/ 126.

to him before describing each instance of what they consider really bad omens:

སྦྲང་མ་མི་སྐད་སླ་བ་ལྟས་ངན་མིན། །
མཁན་སློབ་སྤྱན་སྔར་རབ་ཏུ་ལེགས་བྱུང་ནས། །
ནག་ཆང་དམག་ཇག་ལ་སོགས་བྱེད་པ་ཡི། །
དགེ་སློང་དགེ་ཚུལ་**ཐམས་ཅད་ལྟས་ངན་ཡིན།** །

སྦྲང་མ་མི་སྐད་སླ་བ་ལྟས་ངན་མིན། །
དང་པོར་རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་ལ་ལེགས་སྦྱངས་ནས། །
བར་དུ་ཆོས་བཙོངས་གཞན་གྱི་ནོར་ལེན་པའི། །
གྲོང་ཆོག་མཁས་པ་**ཐམས་ཅད་ལྟས་ངན་ཡིན།** །[15]
etc.

A bee speaking human language is a bad omen!?
All the monks and novices who engage in such things as
Women and wine, fighting [and] robbery, having renounced samsara well
In front of abbots and presiding masters **are bad omens!**

A bee speaking human language is a bad omen!?
All those who at first studied well the Buddha's words
And then in the middle who perform village rites and sell religion
In order to receive the wealth of others by selling it **are bad omens!**
etc.

In the examples cited above, we have seen how repetition decorates the succession of ideas from stanza to stanza. None of these examples uses the popular classical Tibetan meters, and their subject matter seems informal. The *la gzhas*, or mountain songs, themselves are in quatrains and often employ stanza external repetition. I have already remarked on the metric correspondences between the *la gzhas* and Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*.[16] This leads me to

[15] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 66/ 60.
[16] It is well known that a particular type of group of folksongs, the *gzhas* (to be distinguished from the *la gzhas*), consists of quatrains. See Geoffrey Samuel, "Songs of Lhasa," *Ethnomusicology* (1976): 418; Melvyn Goldstein, "Lhasa Street Songs: Political and Social Satire in Traditional Tibet," *The Tibet Journal* 7, nos. 1-2

hypothesize that the likely influence on Skal ldan rgya mtsho's writing of the verses above was popular song.

But the quatrain has also been the most frequently used stanza form in classical Tibetan verse,[17] where it often has a meter of several trochaic feet followed by one more beat (such as 2 + 2 + 3).[18] Skal ldan rgya mtsho employed the quatrain in eulogies he wrote for his lineage and for his main teachers. These include the opening homage of the *Mgur 'bum*, and eulogies to Tsong kha pa, Paṇ chen thams cad mkyen pa (the first Paṇ chen Lama), Mkhas grub Bstan pa dar rgyas (one of his main teachers at Dga' ldan monastery), and Chos pa Rin po che and his past lives. These are usually in the popular classical nine-syllable meter (2 + 2 + 2 + 3). Judging from this list of homages, Skal ldan rgya mtsho felt that the quatrain used with a classical meter was the correct form to choose when he wanted to express respect toward lamas in a conservative way.[19]

(1982): 56 (henceforth referred to as "Lhasa Street Songs"); and Marion H. Duncan, *Love Songs and Proverbs of Tibet* (London: The Mitre Press, 1961), 12. The *gzhas*, however, always has the particular meter of 2 + 2 + 2, and since a very low percentage of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* that are in quatrains use this meter, I discount any significant connection between the *gzhas* and his *mgur*.

[17] Poucha, "Le vers tibétain" (1950): 192, 229.

P. Sørensen states the following in *Divinity Secularized*, 13-14:

> ....in almost all treatises and works translated into canonical Tibetan from Sanskrit and Chinese the four-lined (*tshig rkang bzhi*) iso-syllabic stanza or strophe (the Tibetan śloka) became the fixed norm in versification (*tshigs bcad*). The most prevalent metrical form was the hepta-syllabic in the śloka-quatrians..... This pattern quickly became the most dominant form and was invariably found in most of the classical and canonical versified literature. The Tibetan translation of the popular aphoristic and proverbial literature, predominantly rendered in seven-syllable....... and nine-syllable meter....., consisted of three (resp. four) and a half feet..... The popularity [of versified moral precepts]….which gained a firm footing in the wake of the writings of Sa skya Paṇḍita and his school, exerted a tremendous influence on the later folksong trading by supplying it with a storehouse of proverbs and worldly adages.

According to R. A. Stein, the model for the form rendered so popular through Sa skya Paṇḍita's maxims in Tibet (quatrains of seven syllables per line) was a Tibetan translation of a collection of quatrains by Nāgārjuna (*Shes rab sdong bu: Prajnadanda*). See Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 268-70.

[18] While the quatrain with seven syllables per line was the most popular of all, the quatrain with nine syllables per line was second in popularity.

[19] Some of these have repetition as well, often in the entire last line of each quatrain, which may read something like, "I beseech.... Please bless me." See Mgur I-5, 10-12/ 9-11.

Hence, Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of the quatrain was motivated sometimes by folk song and sometimes by classical verse.

The same cannot be said of the influences on Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of other stanza groups. Examples of less-frequently used two, three and five up through nine lines per stanza are found in classical verse, where they usually have the same meters as the quatrain.[20] But when Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the two-line, three-line and five-line stanzas (exemplified below), he almost never uses them with the characteristic metric patterns of classical verse. This leads me to hypothesize that his use of those stanza forms is motivated by popular song.

As noted above, only a portion of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* that have regular stanza patterns use the four-line stanza form, which, furthermore, is not exclusively associated with classical Tibetan verse since it is also frequently found in folk songs. Therefore, with regard to stanza patterns (and their interaction with metrics), the vast majority of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* are not written in the classical Tibetan style.

Stanzas of Five Lines

There are several *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* that contain stanzas of strictly five lines each. From among these, IV-3 and IV-7 are closely related in that they share whole lines, variations on lines, and metaphors.[21] Besides having stanza lengths and words and even whole lines in common, they are the only two songs in this meter (3 + 2) in the entire *Mgur 'bum*, as we learned in Chapter 7. The fact that Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote two songs (and only two songs) that share these elements suggests that he was experimenting with a particular form. At this point, I cannot hypothesize about the type of popular song that influenced him. I quote here an excerpt from Mgur IV-3:

[20] Poucha, "Le vers tibétain" (1950): 192-215.

[21] For another example of a *mgur* made up of five-line stanzas, see Mgur I-8, 14-16/ 12-14, which is a eulogy to the Dga' ldan lama Mdo rgyud rgya mtsho and his past lives.

ཨོཾ་སྭ་སྟི།

དགེ་སྦྱོར་**གྱི་**མེ་ཏོག །
དད་གུས་**ཀྱི་**ཆུ་བོ**ས**། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བརླན་**ཀྱང་**། །
རྣམ་གཡེང་**གི་**སེར་བ**ས**། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བཅོམ་**ཡ**། །

དགེ་སེམས་**ཀྱི་**མྱུ་གུ། །
ལུང་རིགས་**ཀྱི་**དྲོད་ཀྱི**ས**། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བསྐྱངས་**ཀྱང་**། །
དཀོར་སྒྲིབ་**ཀྱི་**བ་མོ**ས**། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ཁྲིར་**ཡ**། །[22]
etc.

Oṃ sva sti.

Although the flower **of** good behavior
Was watered **again and again**
By the river **of** faith and respect,
[It] was **helplessly** vanquished
By the hailstorm **of** laziness. **Hey!**

Although the sprouts **of** virtuous thoughts
Were tended **again and again**
By the warmth **of** scripture and logic,
[They] were **helplessly** carried away
By the cattle **of** wealth-obscurations. **Hey!**
etc.

The repetitions appear throughout the entire thirteen stanzas of Mgur IV-3. They work together with other regularities of each stanza—the general meaning, the syntax, the way metaphors are used, the meter of five beats over two feet and the five-line sentence length—to emphasize a backbone, or rhythm, that then allows what is different

22 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 71/ 64.

to stand out. Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of metaphors will be discussed in Chapter 10.

Another example which has this stanzaic form is Mgur IV-8, which is translated in full in the appendix:

ཨོ་ཨོ་ཕ་རྒོད་བློ་བཟང་གྲགས་པ། །
ཨའུ་གཏན་གྱི་སྐྱབས་གནས་ཡིན་**ཡ**། །
ཁོ་རེ་སྙིང་ནས་གུས་པས་འདུད་**དང**་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

ཨོ་ཨོ་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉིང་ཁུ་ཡིན་**ཡ**། །
ཁོ་རེ་ཚུལ་བཞིན་ཉམས་སུ་ལོངས་**དང**་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །[23]
etc.

Oh yeah! Prudent father Blo bzang grags pa
Hey you! is a place of perpetual refuge! **Hey!**
Hey! Bow [to him] with respect from the heart!
Ha ha! **The mind is happy and glorious, get it?**
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The *Gradual Stages of Enlightenment*
Hey you! is the essence of religion. **Hey!**
Hey! Practice in accordance with [its] manner!
Ha ha! **The mind is happy and glorious, get it?**
Ya yi ya yi!
etc.

Throughout the *mgur*, the first sentence extends across two lines, the interjection *ya* (hey you!) punctuating the end. The third line is a sentence in the imperative. The fourth line is a one-line sentence with an interrogative interjection, repeated in full. The fifth line is an

[23] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 77/ 69.

interjection. Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of interjections will be discussed in Chapter 10.

The appearance of the emphatic line final *ya*, repeated at the end of each stanza, is rare in the *Mgur 'bum* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, where it is used in only four *mgur*, though repeatedly in those select few. It is interesting to note that three out of the four *mgur* in which *ya* appears are precisely those discussed above—Mgur IV-3, IV-7 and IV-8—which use the five-line stanza. (*Ya* is also found in Mgur VIII-24, which is highly related to Mgur IV-8 through the insertion of the same set of sounds into the songs, also discussed in Chapter 10.)

It seems that in most *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* that use stanzas of five lines, a variety of other oddities of style accompany this little-used stanza length. These oddities include a meter exclusively used in this form, interjections of a certain set of sounds that begin the lines (of the *mgur* that use them, one is in this form and one is in the four-line form), and the use of an interjection at the end of a line (three of the four *mgur* that use it appear in this form). Anomalies such as these that suggest that Skal ldan rgya mtsho is not only experimenting with unusual stanza patterns themselves, but associating a pattern with other distinctive features of style as well. It does not seem coincidental that Skal ldan rgya mtsho chose the five-line form for some cases of unique expression among his songs.

Stanzas of Three Lines

In the *Mgur 'bum* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, there are also a few *mgur* made up of stanzas of three lines. I quote an excerpt from Mgur IV-9, translated in full in the appendix, as an example of this form:

ཨ་མེ་བླ་མ་བརྙེན་**ཚུལ་འདི་ལ།** །
བྱིན་རླབས་དངོས་གྲུབ་དོན་ལ་**ཏྲ་ཏྲ།** །
རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་ལ་**ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ།** །

ཨ་མེ་མི་ཚེ་གཟད་**ཚུལ་འདི་ལ།** །
ཕྱི་མར་བདེ་འགྲོའི་དོན་ལ་**ཏྲ་ཏྲ།** །
སྡིག་ཅན་འཆི་ཀར་**ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ།** །

ཨ་མེ་འཆི་བདག་བཏུད་[24] **ཚུལ་འདི་ལ**། །
ཚེ་བརྟན་པའི་དོན་ལ་**ཧ་ཧ**། །
མི་མང་འཆི་ཚུལ་**ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ**། །[25]
etc.

Oh my—this way of relying on a lama
For the benefits of blessings and spiritual powers! **Uh huh!**
Look at the pronouncements of the Victorious One, and
reconsider it!

Oh my—this way in you have consumed human life
For the purpose of going to happiness in a future life! **Uh huh!**
Look at [being at] the point of death with sins, and **reconsider it!**

Oh my—this way of having approached the Lord of Death
For the purpose of a stable life! **Uh huh!**
Look at how many people die, and **reconsider it!**
etc.

Throughout this *mgur*, the sounds *a me* and *ha ha*[26] frame the very action Skal ldan rgya mtsho is criticizing and then in the final line of the three-line stanza he gives advice as to what to do instead. It is probable that Skal ldan rgya mtsho is addressing himself in this highly critical way.

It is interesting to see that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the verbal ending *ye* exclusively in the *mgur* cited above, IV-9, where it always follows *go*, to understand, and occurs thirteen times.[27]

Mgur V-11, also translated in full in the appendix, is another example of a *mgur* made up almost entirely of three-line sentences with repetition:

[24] *btud* ACD; *btul* B. I have chosen *btud*, the pf. of *'dud*, in the sense of *thag je nyer song ba*, through communication with the Rong bo scholar Blo bzang chos grags.
[25] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 79/ 71.
[26] The meanings of *a me* and *ha ha* will also be discussed in my section on interjections in Chapter 10.
[27] The meaning of a related interjection, *e go*, will be discussed in Chapter 10.

དུས་ད་ལྟའི་བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཡོན་ཏན་རྣམས། །
རྗེ་བླ་མའི་དྲིན་དུ་མི་གོ་བའི། །
ཁྱོད་ཆོས་བཤད་མཁན་པོ་སྨྱོས་སམ་ཅི། །

རྟེན་རྙེད་དཀའི་མི་ལུས་ཐོབ་དུས་འདིར། །
ཚེ་ཕྱི་མའི་དོན་ཀུན་བློས་དོར་བའི། །
ཁྱོད་དཔེ་མང་ལྟ་མཁན་སེམས་མེད་དམ། །

གྲོགས་ཕལ་ཆེར་འཆི་བ་མཐོང་བཞིན་དུ། །
རང་འཆི་སྙམ་མེད་པའི་བསམ་མེད་པོ། །
ཁྱོད་རང་སྙིང་རང་ལ་མི་རྗེའམ[28]། །[29]
etc.

You don't understand that your present happiness
Is because of the lama's kindness.
You master of religious discourses, are you crazy or what?

You have rejected all concerns for a future life
In this time of having obtained a human body, in which acquiring a support is difficult.
You who have looked at all kinds of books, have you no mind?

You haven't given a thought to [your] lack of thought for your own death
While watching the deaths of most of [your] friends.
Should **you** not have pity on your own heart [for being like this]?
etc.

The sole repetition in this *mgur* is of the word *khyod*, you. Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho addresses himself in a highly critical way, though the colophon states that he has written the song with affectionate thoughts (*sha tsha*, literally hot meat).

Another example of a *mgur* made up of three-line stanzas is Mgur VII-17, which shows yet another unusual stylistic feature. It also is translated in full in the appendix:

[28] *rje'am* AB; *rje 'am* CD.
[29] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 104/ 93-94.

རྔོན་པ་ ཁྱི་ཁྲིད་**ནི་** **སླེབས་**[30] **བྱུང་།** །
ཤ་བ་ སྨུག་པོ་**ནི་** **འབྲོས་ས།** །
རྫ་རི་ མཐོན་པོ་**ནི་** **བཟང་ངོ་།** །

ང་རྒྱལ་ སེང་གེ་**ནི་** **སླེབས་**[31] **བྱུང་།** །
ཡོན་ཏན་ རི་བོང་**ནི་** **འབྲོས་ས།** །
ཁེངས་སྐྱུངས་[32] བྲག་ཕུག་**ནི་** **བཟང་ངོ་།** །[33]
etc.

The hunter, leading a dog, **arrived**.
The place of refuge for the dark bay stag,
A high clay mountain, **was good**.

The proud lion **arrived**.
The place of refuge for the rabbit of qualities,
A cave for leaving arrogance behind, **was good**.

Ni appears as the fifth syllable of every line of the *mgur*. Skal ldan rgya mtsho seems to have deliberately chosen this repetition: although *ni* has a grammatical function in the first and third line of every stanza, a genitive particle would have been the correct choice in the second line. The constant use of *ni* in this *mgur* recalls a style of poetry from the *snga dar*.[34]

The meter of Mgur VII-17, 2 + 3 + 2, is yet another feature that makes it quite original among the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. Even the seven beat line in any set of subdivisions is rare among his

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[30] *slebs* CD; *sleb* AB.
[31] *slebs* CD; *sleb* AB.
[32] *khengs* BCD; *kheng* A; *skyungs* ACD; *bskyungs* B.
[33] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 160/ 142.
[34] Examples of verse attributed to the *snga dar* can be seen in F. W. Thomas, *Ancient Folk-literature from North-eastern Tibet (Introductions, Texts, Translations and Notes)*, Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin: Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst. Jahrgang 1952 no. 3 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), *Texts, Translations and Notes*, 9-19, translated on 20-32; 61-76, translated on 77-95, and so on; J. Bacot, F. W. Thomas and Ch. Toussaint, ed., trans., *Documents de Touen houang relatifs à l'histoire du Tibet* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1940–46), 97-122, translated on 127-70; and G. Uray, "Queen Sad mar kar's Songs in the Old Tibetan Chronicle," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 25 (1972), 5-38.
Skal ldan rgya mtsho's unusual use of the particle *ni* was also discussed in Chapter 7.

mgur. As we saw in Chapter 7, a scant eleven of the songs of the *Mgur 'bum* employ this number of beats per line, and use three sets of subdivisions: 2 + 2 + 3, 3 + 2 + 2, and 2 + 3. The *mgur* quoted above is the only *mgur* that uses 2 + 3 + 2 extensively.

Among the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum*, Mgur VII-17 above demonstrates unusual qualities such as an unusual meter and an unusual, extensive use of the particle *ni*. This further demonstrates my hypothesis that unusual stanza lengths are often accompanied by other unique features of style and/or theme.

Like the *mgur* in the *Mgur 'bum* that employ stanzas of five lines, those with stanzas of three lines are infrequent and often accompanied by other unique features of style and/or theme, such as interjections, Amdo dialect, heavy self-criticism, extensive use of the particle *ni*, and a very unusual meter. As in the case of *mgur* with stanzas of five lines, it seems that Skal ldan rgya mtsho chose this form for cases of unusual expression among his songs.

Stanzas of Two Lines

Examples of *mgur* written exclusively with two-line stanzas are also few. We have already seen two of these in cycles of *mgur* that take the form of conversations with animals. Mgur cycle IV-1, in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho has a conversation with and receives teachings from bees, is translated in full in the appendix. I quote IV-1d in full below, in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho addresses bees in two couplets:

ངས་བླ་མ་བརྒྱ་ཡི་ཞལ་མཐོང་ཡང་། །
ཆོས་དེ་ལས་ཟབ་པ་ངས་མ་ཐོས། །

ཁྱེད་བདེན་ནོ་བདེན་ནོ་སྦྲང་མ་བདེན། །
ད་མི་མགོ་མི་སྐོར་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད། །[35]

Although I have seen the faces of a hundred lamas
I have not heard a teaching deeper than that!

[35] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 67/ 60.

You're right bees, right! You bees are right!
Now I'll stay by myself, in order not to waver!

As discussed in Chapter 6, in the dialogues with animals, the animals represent teachers who give correct advice and Skal ldan rgya mtsho portrays himself as a skeptic who is gradually persuaded by them. The terseness of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's response to the bees above is in contrast to their twenty-four-line argument to him that preceded it. There is nothing more for him to say to them now that he knows that they are right, other than to acknowledge their teaching and to tell them he is now going to live in solitude.

Mgur cycle IV-2, in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho has a conversation with lice, fleas and lice eggs, also has a section comprised of couplets. Below is part IV-2e, quoted in full, in which lice eggs give him some advice:

ཡང་སྲོ་མང་རྣམས་འཛུམ་བཞིན་དུ་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར་རོ། །

ང་གོས་སྲུབས་[36] བསམ་གཏན་ཁང་པ་ན། །
ལུས་གཡོ་འགུལ་མེད་པར་ཏིང་འཛིན་བསྒོམ། །

ཁྱོད་གཅིག་པུར་ཏིང་འཛིན་སྒོམ་[37] སྤྲོ་ན། །
ཁྱོད་ང་ལ་མ་འཚེ་ང་བཞིན་འདུག །[38]

Also the lice eggs, smiling, said this:

In our meditation huts [within] the fabric of [your] clothes,
Our bodies not moving, we will meditate in *samādhi*.

If you delight in meditative states in solitude,
Don't hurt us but dwell as we dwell.

The speech of the lice eggs above, in two couplets, is the shortest in the entire cycle of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's conversation with lice, fleas and lice eggs. Perhaps the brevity of what the lice eggs have to say reflects the simplicity of their being in a state of meditation, clarity and peace.

[36] *srubs* CD; *srub* AB.
[37] *sgom* D; *bsgom* ABC.
[38] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 69/ 62.

As for an example of two-line stanzas that comprise one-line sentences, I quote from Mgur III-1 below. Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho is addressing himself:

> གྲོང་དུ་འདུག་ཡུན་རིང་ན་རང་མཚང་སྟོན། །
> འདུག་ས་དབེན་པར་གྱིས་**དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ**། །
>
> ཟས་ནོར་བསོད་ནམས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བར་ཆད་ཡིན། །
> འདོད་ཆུང་ཆོག་ཤེས་གྱིས་**དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ**། །
>
> གྲོགས་ངན་བསྟེན་ན་རང་ཡང་ཇེ་ངན་འགྲོ་ །
> རྟག་ཏུ་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད་**དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ**། །[39]
> etc.
>
> If [you] live in a town for a long time, [you] show your own faults.
> Make [your] dwelling place solitary, **mountain hermit!**
>
> Food, wealth and merit are hindrances to religion.
> Be satisfied with whatever occurs, **mountain hermit!**
>
> If [you] rely on bad friends, you yourself will also get worse!
> Always stay alone, **mountain hermit!**
> etc.

In the couplets above, the first sentence makes some statement of a problem or potential problem, to which the second sentence emphatically prescribes a solution in the imperative, followed by the evocative, *ri khrod pa*, mountain hermit!

Similar in style to Mgur III-1, above, is Mgur IV-6:

> བླ་མ་རྙེད་པར་དཀ**འོ**། །
> བསམ་དང་སྦྱོར་བས་བསྟེན་**ཨང**་། །
>
> མི་ལུས་རྙེད་པར་དཀ**འོ**། །
> དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ལ་འབད་**ཨང**་། །

[39] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 33/ 30.

ཚེ་ལོ་མཐར་ཕྱིན་དཀའོ། །
ད་ནས་འཆི་གྲབས་གྱིས་**ཨང**་། །[40]
etc.

It is difficult to find a lama.
Rely [on him] through thoughts and practice.

It is difficult to obtain a human body.
Strive after the holy religion.

It is difficult to go to the end of [one's] years of life.
From now on, prepare for death.
etc.

Here again, the first sentence is some statement of difficulty or a problem, and the second is a solution, given in the imperative.

The usage of two-line stanzas in the *Mgur 'bum* varies. The subject of the *mgur* is often gently given advice (as in many *mgur*). It seems that Skal ldan rgya mtsho did not accompany this stanza pattern with many of the unusual features that appeared regularly in his *mgur* of five or of three-line stanzas.

Mgur *with Exceptionally Long Sentences*

The longest sentence in the *Mgur 'bum*, one of eighty-four lines, is in Mgur III-8, and is a eulogy to Chos pa Rin po che. This eulogy praises Chos pa Rin po che for who he is and what he has done. Here I would like to focus on excerpts from the long sentence, which begins in the twenty-fifth line of the *mgur*, and continues all the way through the closing dedication.

Now let us look at how Skal ldan rgya mtsho extended this sentence. The full name of his brother/ teacher, Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, fills a whole line, since each has six syllables, subdivided into three groups of two. This is a meter very rarely found in the *Mgur 'bum* and that I discussed in Chapter 7. The line

40 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 74/ 67. This song corresponds in form, meter and imperative verbs to the Ding ri Brgya rtsa, attributed to Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas. On the levels of morals and wording it is very similar too. In Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, *ri khrod pa* is found in the place of Ding ri ba.

with his name is repeated every four lines. In the three lines between his name, various means are used to keep the sentence going. Sometimes the three lines are made up of a series of appositions:

འདི་ཕྱིའི་ལེགས་ཚོགས་རྩ་བ། །
ཡོན་ཏན་ཀུན་གྱི་གཞི་མ། །
བློ་གཏད་བསླུ་མེད་སྐྱབས་གནས། །
བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །[41]
etc.

Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan,
The place of unbeguiling refuge for the single-pointed mind,
The foundation of all qualities,
The root of accumulations of good for this and future lives.....
etc.

Sometimes the three lines modifying Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan's name form a single apposition that is modified by a relative clause or clauses:

དལ་འབྱོར་དོན་ཆེར་དགོངས་ནས། །
ཉིན་མཚན་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་འདའ་བས། །
མཚན་དོན་མཐུན་པའི་ཆོས་པ། །
བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །[42]
etc.

Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan,
The man of cloth who harmonizes with the meaning [of his] name,
By means of passing night and day with religion,
Having contemplated greatly the purpose of a leisure support.....
etc.

Sometimes the entire three lines constitute a relative clause or clauses that modify his name:

[41] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 45/ 41.
[42] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 45/ 41.

མི་རྟག་ཐུགས་ལ་འཁྲུངས་ནས། །
འདི་སྣང་འཁྲི་བ་བཅད་དེ། །
རྩེ་གཅིག་སྒྲུབ་ལ་གཞོལ་བའི། །
བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །[43]
etc.

Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan,
Who has severed this attachment to appearances,
Impermanence having arisen in [his] mind,
And who has applied [himself] diligently to the practice of
single-mindedness.....
etc.

Now let us look at another *mgur*, V-13, that includes another extended sentence honoring Chos pa Rin po che in thirteen lines, as an introduction to a song. Since it is quite different in form from the long stanza in III-8, and since it has quite a beautiful form, I have translated the entire sentence in full. Even though the order of subject and object is usually turned around in the English translation of such a sentence, I have followed the Tibetan order, presenting the full description of the object (Chos pa Rin po che) first in my translation.

ལྷ་དཀར་ཕྱོགས་སྐྱོང་བའི་མཐུ་བོ་ཆེ། །
གཉན་བྲག་དཀར་སྤྱན་གསུམ་ཛ་མདུན་ངོས། །
ས་ཀོ་ར་ཀབ་རོམ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་མཚམས། །
ཁྱོན་རབ་ཡངས་དབྱིབས་བཟང་ཐང་གི་འགྲམ། །
ཁོང་དམ་པ་གོང་མས་བྱིན་བརླབས་པའི། །
བྲག་ཁྱུད་འཕགས་དགོན་རོང་དབེན་གནས་སུ། །
དྲིན་འཁོར་མེད་བླ་མ་དགེ་བའི་བཤེས། །
མཚན་ཡོངས་གྲགས་ཆོས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
དུས་ཁོར་ཡུག་ཐུགས་དམ་རིམ་པ་ལ། །
བརྩོན་ཆུ་རྒྱུན་ལྟ་བུར་སྐྱོང་བའི་དྲུང་། །
བདག་སྐལ་ལྡན་མཇལ་དུ་འོངས་པའི་ཚེ། །

[43] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 45-46.

ཕ་བླ་མའི་བཀའ་དྲིན་ལེགས་དྲན་པའི། །
ངག་གླུ་དབྱངས་སྙན་མོ་འདི་ལྟར་འཐེན། །

ཁྱེད་དད་གུས་ལྡན་རྣམས་ཡུད་ཙམ་ཉོན། །
(end of introduction)[44]

On the side of a wide and well-shaped high plain
On the border between the places Ko ra [and] Kab rom[45]
On the front side of the clay three brothers[46] of rugged Brag dkar,
The great powerful ones, the gods who carry out good purposes,
As for him, the holy one,
The spiritual friend, lama whose kindness
At the solitary place Dgon rong,
The especially noble rock which was blessed by ones of former
  times, cannot be repaid,
Chos pa Rin po che, whose name is famous everywhere
[And] whose effort is extended in the stages of [his] tutelary deity
To the outmost limit of time like the flow of a river,
When I, Skal ldan, came to meet [him],
In remembrance of the good kindness of father lama.
[I] sang in this way a well-sounding song.

You faithful and respectful ones—listen a while!

(end of introduction)

This stanza has been extended by a variety of kinds of phrases modifying Chos pa Rin po che, and as the sentence goes on we eventually learn that he is merely the object of the main verb and recognize that the unarticulated surprise subject is Skal ldan rgya mtsho, in the last line.

It is interesting that two of the longest sentences in the *Mgur 'bum* revere Skal ldan rgya mtsho's teacher. It seems that these odd sentence forms tickled Chos pa Rin po che's fancy. Maybe Skal ldan rgya mtsho felt he wanted to honor his teacher in some unique way!

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[44] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 106-7/ 95.

[45] Contrast with Brag dgon Zhabs drung Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, *Mdo smad chos 'byung* (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982), 295. Here, the spelling is *kab ron*.

[46] These three peaks are in close physical proximity to one another, and are considered three brothers, or lords of the land (*sa bdag*).

The longest sentence has an unusual meter (2 + 2 + 2), that was discussed in Chapter 7.

In this chapter and the preceding one, I have shown that Skal ldan rgya mtsho employed a wide variety of styles in singing his *mgur*. His choices of meters and stanza patterns are influenced mainly by folk songs but also by classical Tibetan verse suggesting that the dichotomous lifestyle he lived played a large role in bringing a wide range of influences to his writing. We will now look at another stylistic element, namely the poetic figures of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*.

CHAPTER NINE

POETIC FIGURES
I. THOSE SHOWING INFLUENCE FROM THE *KĀVYĀDARŚA*

Now that we have analyzed the metrics and stanza patterns of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, we will investigate some of the poetic figures (*alaṃkāra*, *rgyan*) that he uses. Some of his poetic figures show the direct influence of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa*, *The Mirror of Poetics*, which "formed the necessary precondition for the development of Tibetan ornate poetry after its translation from Sanskrit into Tibetan in the thirteenth century."[1] Daṇḍin defined poetic figures as features which create the beauty of a succession of words with a distinguished meaning,[2] and gave many examples in his text. Ornate poetry (*kāvya, snyan ngag*) is poetry composed in accordance with the *Kāvyādarśa* and other treatises of *kāvya.*

We can understand what ornate poetry is in Tibet by situating it in a larger context. Let us look at the following quote by R. Jackson again, which distinguishes three genres of Tibetan poetry—*glu*, *mgur* and *snyan ngag*[3]—this time focusing on what he says about *snyan ngag*:

> ...*glu*, *mgur* and *snyan ngag* (along with the Ge sar epic corpus) together roughly comprise the Tibetan poetic canon. *Glu*, which remains in Tibetan as a general term for "song," is the earliest, most indigenous, most secular, and most orally and musically oriented of the genres. *mGur*, which originally was either a synonym or a subdivision of *glu*, came eventually to denote a more Buddhistic type of "song," and might be

[1] Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra," in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996), 392.

[2] John F. Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression: The Central Chapter of Daṇḍin's 'Kāvyādarśa'" (Ph.D. diss., Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1989), 81, 333. (Henceforth referred to as "A Calculus of Creative Expression.") I will go into more detail about this definition below.

[3] Jackson defines the poetry of the Ge sar epic as being outside the parameters of his article, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 369.

> either Tibetan or Indian in its inspiration, oral or written in its style. *sNyan ngag*, "speech [agreeable] to the ear," is an ornate, written, Indian-inspired type of Buddhist (and occasionally secular) poetry that did not appear until the thirteenth century, well after the other two genres.[4]

Hence, *snyan ngag* (ornate poetry) is not *glu* (song); nor is it *mgur* (religious song). *Glu*, *mgur* and *snyan ngag* are three distinguishable yet interrelated genres. Unlike the other two, *snyan ngag* is always influenced by Indian ornate poetry, is never sung, and does not appear in Tibet until the thirteenth century.

Once the study of the *Kāvyādarśa* took hold in Tibet, its influence there was huge, as L. van der Kuijp explains:

> The enormous impact of Daṇḍin's text on Tibetan letters in general is also apparent from the fourteenth century onward, where one can discern a conscious use of its poetic figures—these fall into two classes: poetic figures based on semantic considerations a phonological ones—in virtually every literary genre, whether it be in eulogies, biographies, chronicles or dissertations on medicine, astrology and so on.[5]

Daṇḍin classified his poetic figures into two main types: those that involved semantic considerations and those that involved phonological ones. These began to appear in a conscious way in every literary genre in Tibet not long after the translation of the *Kāvyādarśa* into Tibetan in the thirteenth century.

Daṇḍin's text also influenced other poetic genres—*mgur*, and, to a lesser extent, *glu*—as Jackson explains:

> ...the theory and practice of *snyan ngag* influenced the composition of *mgur*—and perhaps even *glu*—from the thirteenth century onward. However, its influence upon the tradition of *glu* was slight, and among *mgur* composers it influenced most those who received a classical monastic education, and least those whose sphere was less academic.

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[4] Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 369-70.

[5] van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra," 397.

> *sNyan ngag* itself was composed almost entirely by those with an academic background—but as the monastic university system took hold in Tibet, this came to include many of the nation's greatest thinkers and, for that matter, saints.[6]

In summary, *snyan ngag* is ornamental poetry written in accordance with the *Kāvyādarśa*. When its influence appears in *mgur*, it is likely to be found in those by song-writers who had a monastic education.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho is an example of someone who underwent a rigorous traditional monastic education in Dga' ldan for eleven years, during which time he was surely exposed to the principles of ornate poetry, and later wrote *mgur*. This sets him apart from many composers of *mgur* related to the Bka' brgyud pa school—such as Mi la ras pa—whom we normally associate with *mgur*, who were not educated in monasteries.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho refers to *snyan dngags*[7] at various times in his songs,[8] and in various colophons to songs in his *Mgur 'bum*, he is referred to *as* "*snyan dngags mkhan*,"[9] in the sense of "poet" rather than in direct reference to Daṇḍin's *snyan ngag*. Not surprisingly, the majority of references to *snyan dngags* in the *Mgur 'bum* are made in relation to Tsong kha pa, and yet another reference is made in a eulogy to Bstan pa dar rgyas, a teacher Skal ldan rgya mtsho relied on for mainstream studies of *Madhyamaka* at Dga' ldan monastery for seven years.[10] It appears that Skal ldan rgya mtsho aspired to use what he called "poetry" in eulogies and other songs honoring some of those with whom he had a most formal and conservative relationship.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's biographer also remarks on a time in 1677 at the hermitage of Bkra shis 'khyil when a lama named Rgyal ba Rin po che gave teachings on the ornate poetry relating to phonological relationships:

[6] Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 375.

[7] References to *snyan ngag* are spelled "*snyan dngags*" in the *Mgur 'bum* as well as in Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar.*

[8] There are references to *snyan dngags* in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, Mgur I-2 and XII-12.

[9] In colophons to Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, Mgur I-2, I-4, and XI-9, he refers to himself as such.

[10] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 8.

སྐབས་འདི་ཚོ་ལ་དཔོན་སློབ་པཎ་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དང་རྒྱལ་བ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་རྣམ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་དབུ་མཛད་པའི་བླ་མ་མང་པོས་གསུང་ཆོས་མང་པོ་གནང་གིན་འདུག་གསུངས། ལགས། རྒྱལ་བ་རིན་པོ་ཆེས་གསུང་ཆོས་ཅི་འདྲ་ཞིག་གནང་བྱུང་ཞུས་པས། **སྒྲ་སྙན་དངགས་**ཀྱི་སྒྲོར་མང་པོ་གནང་གིན་འདུག་གསུངས།[11]

Some of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs, as may be expected, include poetic figures written in accordance with the *Kāvyādarśa*.

In order to understand what Daṇḍin meant by the term poetic figure, it is helpful to first understand what he meant by body, since he makes the distinction between body and poetic figure. I quote verse I.10 of the *Kāvyādarśa*:

> And by these [earlier writers] the body and ornaments of *kāvya*s are shown/
> Basically the body is a succession of words distinguished with desired meaning.[12]

Daṇḍin defines the body of ornate poetry exclusively in terms of its meaning as conveyed by a sequence of words.[13] His definition of poetic figure is also very broad, as we see in verse II.1:

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[11] Ngag dbang*, Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 124.

[12] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 81.

[13] Having defined the body of ornate poetry in verse I.10, Daṇḍin immediately goes on to define some of the general characteristics of ornate poetry in I.11:

> It is classified in a threefold way: Whether stanzaic, prosaic, or their mixture/
> The stanzaic consists of four *pāda*s and is either in *vṛtta* or *jāti*.

For this, see Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 81.
Daṇḍin has defined the most general characteristics in terms of stanza patterns (four *pāda*s, or quarters) and two types of meter (*vṛtta and jāti*). These two major types of meter have various subkinds, and are defined by the number and position of syllables, whether the syllables are light or heavy (*vṛtta*) or are determined by the number of "sound instants" (*jāti*). Eppling explains these types of meters in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 81-85.

The applicability and inapplicability of Indian metrics to Tibetan verse will be addressed in my discussion below on the poetic figure of *yamaka* (repetition involving groups of letters). But here I will quickly deal with the concept of weight, by quoting Eppling's definitions of light and heavy vowels:

> ...whether "light"/ _laghu_, where the vowel is short and not followed by more than one consonant; or "heavy"/ _guru_, where the vowel is long, or if short it is followed by two or more consonants (whether in another word or not) or if the syllable contains either an _anusvāra_ or _visarga_.

Features creating the beauty of *kāvya*
are called *alaṃkāra*s.
Even today they are being postulated—
Who could completely describe them? [14]

There are an unlimited number of poetic figures, it seems. Daṇḍin uses the second chapter of his treatise to describe 35 types that have semantic relationships, frequently with numerous subdivisions, and part of his third (and last) chapter to describe various poetic figures that involve phonological relationships.

It should be mentioned here that not all poetic figures found in *mgur* exhibit an influence from Daṇḍin. Some of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's other poetic figures cannot be linked exclusively to the principles of ornate poetry. Others have no connection with anything in the *Kāvyādarśa*. Before going on to indigenous types of figures in Chapter 10, I will give examples of five figures dealing with repetition of syllables (*yamaka*), one example involving phonemic restriction (*niyama*), and one example of a riddle (*prahelikā*), that are clearly the most influenced by Daṇḍin's treatise. What follows is not meant to be an exhaustive list of poetic figures in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, a task beyond the scope of this book. The examples below all fall under the general category of verbal figures (*sgra rgyan*), one of Daṇḍin's two major categories of poetic figures.

YAMAKA

The first five examples below are examples of various subtypes of a poetic figure named *yamaka* (variations of "phonemic repetition"), which Daṇḍin defines in verse III.1:

For this, see Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 82.
I may quickly remind the reader that there are no short and long vowels in Tibetan. Hence, Indian theories of metrics that define themselves according to weight are not literally applicable in Tibetan. Having said that, I will preface the ensuing description of the poetic figure of *yamaka* by stating that it is my contention that Indian theories of metrics are still loosely applicable in Tibetan, as my examples of *yamaka* will illustrate.

[14] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 333.

> *yamaka* is the repetition of groups of letters—contiguous or discontiguous/
> Its range pertains to the initial, medial, and final parts of *pāda*s.[15]

In verse III.2, Daṇḍin elaborates on what he means by contiguous and discontiguous, and on the possible placements of the repetitions alluded to above:

> The varieties of *yamaka*s may appear in one of the four *pāda*s [of the conventional *padya*, or "stanza,"] in all, or in any combination: in the beginning; middle; end; the middle and end; the middle and beginning; the beginning and end; and throughout.[16]

Hence, the many varieties of *yamaka* are based on whether the group of letters and its repetition are in the same *pāda* (or quarter) of a stanza (in which case the repetition is contiguous), or in different *pāda*s (in which case the repetition is discontiguous), on which *pāda*s they are in, and on the placement (or placements) of the group of letters to be repeated and its repetition (at the beginning, middle or end of its *pāda*).[17]

The importance of *yamaka* for Daṇḍin is clear: after his general presentation of it, he goes on, in seventy-five more verses, to give examples of various subtypes of *yamaka* one by one in detail. Of the one hundred and twenty-four verses devoted to *sgra rgyan* (one of the two larger sections into which all of Daṇḍin's poetic figures fall), seventy-seven are devoted to *yamaka*. This shows that he considers repetition and its myriad varieties very important features of his quest to describe and prescribe how to create beauty in ornate poetry.

The first poetic figure that I will illustrate here is found in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Mgur III-17, an arrangement in verse of sacred writings

[15] Daṇḍin, III.1, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 200. It should be noted that we are now discussing the question of repetition *within* a stanza. In Chapter 8 on stanza patterns, the repetitions described were not those within a single stanza but in corresponding places from stanza to stanza.

[16] Daṇḍin, III.2, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 200.

[17] A contiguous initial *yamaka* would have the group of letters that will be repeated placed at the beginning of a *pāda*, followed by its repetition. A discontiguous initial *yamaka* would have both the group of letters that will be repeated and its repetition at the beginning of their respective *pāda*s.

of lamas, scholars and practitioners. In this excerpt, lines 20 to 25, the first and second syllables are the same:

> ཧྲིག་ཧྲིག་གི་མིག་གིས་གཉེན་ལ་ལྟ། །
> ངར་ངར་གྱི་དབུགས་ཕྱིང་ཆད་ལ་ཉེ། །
> ནོམ་ནོམ་གྱི་ལག་པས་གོས་ལ་རེག །
> འཇིགས་འཇིགས་ཀྱི་གཤེད་མས་བསྡིགས་[18] སྣང་འབྱུང་། །
> ལྡབ་ལྡིབ་ཀྱི་གདམ་གྱིས་ཁ་ཆེམས་[19] འདོག །[20]

Since the pattern of subdivision of the eight syllables per line is 3 + 2 + 3 syllables, the repeated syllables in this case belong to the same semantic unit, as my subdivisions of the lines will show:

ཧྲིག་ཧྲིག་གི་	མིག་གིས་	གཉེན་ལ་ལྟ། །
ངར་ངར་གྱི་	དབུགས་ཕྱིང་	ཆད་ལ་ཉེ། །
ནོམ་ནོམ་གྱི་	ལག་པས་	གོས་ལ་རེག །
འཇིགས་འཇིགས་ཀྱི་	གཤེད་མས་	སྡིགས་སྣང་འབྱུང་།
ལྡབ་ལྡིབ་ཀྱི་	གདམ་གྱིས་	ཁ་ཆེམས་འདོག །

etc.

> [One] looks upon kinsmen shyly.
> [He] keeps [his] promises [with] a series of feeble breaths.
> [He] touches [his skin] to his clothes [so that they pull his hair], by turning them around at the point of death.
> The appearance of having been threatened by the very frightful messenger of the lord of death arises [in him].
> [He] makes a testament with faint speech.

Hrig hrig, *ngar ngar*, *nom nom* and *ldab ldab* are all recognized compounds. The first syllable and its repetition together have a single meaning, which can found in the *TTC*. I have interpreted *'jigs*

[18] *bsdigs* CD; *sdigs* AB.
[19] *chems* CD; *chem* AB.
[20] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 59/ 53. I have included the fifth line above as an illustration of syllable repetition, although it involves a vowel change, following G. Uray's examples in "Duplication, Gemination and Triplication in Tibetan," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 4, nos. 1-3 (1955): 177-217, 220-31. Here he discusses at length repetitions such as those in the first four lines above, and also treats those that make a vowel change.

’jigs as a kind of expression of extremity, and have translated *’jigs ’jigs kyi* with the phrase, “very frightful.”

Each line of the excerpt above begins with an example of contiguous initial *yamaka*, adapted to Tibetan metrics (in this case with three feet per line). Daṇḍin describes this subtype of *yamaka* in Verse III.4:

> Mānena mā’nena sakhi praṇayo’bhūtpriye jane/
> Khaṇḍitā kaṇṭham āślishya tam eva kuru satrapam/ /[21]

S. K. Belvalkar translates verse III.4 as follows:

> Not with this angry-pride my friend, should you show your affection for the beloved person; betrayed-in-love you should wound [your arms] round [the traitor’s] neck and even [so] put him to shame.[22]

Interestingly, a Tibetan translation of Verse III.4 seems quite useless, as it translates Daṇḍin’s stanza literally, without putting repetitions in where they should be:

> གྲོགས་མོ་མཛའ་བོའི་སྐྱེ་བོ་ལ །
> ཁེངས་པ་འདི་དང་འགྲོགས་མ་བྱེད །
> བསླུས་པའི་མགྲིན་པ་ནས་འཁྱུད་ལ །
> དེ་ཉིད་ངོ་ཚ་ལྡན་པར་གྱིས། །[23]

But it is clear that awareness of this variation of *yamaka* (Tib.: *zung ldan*) existed in Tibet. Don grub rgyal makes reference to Daṇḍin’s Verse III.1 by writing about where repetitions can fall in the line:

[21] S. K. Belvalkar, *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin: Sanskrit Text and English Translation* (Poona: The Oriental Book-supplying Agency, 1924), 51. (Henceforth referred to as Belvalkar, *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin.*)

[22] For the reader’s enjoyment, I will provide translations of Daṇḍin’s illustrations that I cite here by Belvalkar in my text or footnotes below. For this, see *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin,* 51.

[23] Anukul Chandra Banerjee, ed., *Kāvyādarśa: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1939), 207.

བྱ་སླ་བའི་རྒྱན།

བྱ་སླ་བའི་རྒྱན་འདི་སྙན་ངག་གི་གཞུང་དུ་འབྱུང་བ་ལྟར་བར་ཆོད་པ་དང་། མ་ཆོད་པ། ཆོད་ཅིང་མ་ཆོད་པ་བཅས་རྣམ་པ་གསུམ་ཡོད་ལ།.......[24]

Figures that are Easy to Do[25]

As for poetic figures that are easy to do, according to the *Kāvyādarśa* there are three types: discontiguous, contiguous, and both discontiguous and contiguous.

He states that examples of contiguous *yamaka* (*bar ma chod pa'i zung ldan*) exist in *mgur* written by Tibetan lamas and yogis of former times:

བར་མ་ཆོད་པའི་ཐོག་མའི་ཟུང་ལྡན་ལ་སྙན་ངག་གི་སྒོ་དང་བསྟུན་ན་རྣམ་པ་བཅོ་ལྔར་གྲགས་ལ། དེ་རྣམས་སྔོན་བྱོན་གྱི་བླ་ཆེན་དང་རྣལ་འབྱོར་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བློ་གྲོས་ཀྱི་རྩལ་ལས་ཐོན་པའི་མགུར་གླུའི་ནང་ནས་དཔེར་བརྗོད་བཙལ་ནའང་རྙེད་ཐུབ་སོད།[26]

When [one] conforms with the methods of *snyan ngag* with regard to contiguous initial *yamaka*, fifteen types [can] be known, and even when [one] searches for examples from within the *mgur* which emerged from the mastery of the intellects of forerunners, great lamas and yogis, they indeed can be found.

As an example of contiguous initial *yamaka*, he gives an excerpt from a *mgur* written by Bya btang Byams pa chos dar.[27]

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[24] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 535.

[25] Don grub rgyal gives examples of *yamaka* under the subheadings *bya sla ba'i rgyan* (poetic figures that are easy to do) and *bya dka' ba'i rgyan* (poetic figures that are hard to do).

[26] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 535-36.

[27] The excerpt reads as follows:

ཟབ་ཟབ་ཆོས་སྟོན་བླ་མར། །
དང་དང་སྙིང་ནས་འདུད་དོ། །
ལིགས་ལིགས་འཁྲིག་འཁྲིག་གླུ་དབྱངས། །
ལྷང་ལྷང་ཡང་ཡང་ལེན་ནོ། །

For this, see Dong grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 536.

Hence, in spite of the misleading Tibetan translation of the passage in the *Kāvyādarśa* that illustrates contiguous initial *yamaka*, it is clear that there was awareness, in Tibet, of how this form of *yamaka* actually worked.[28] Furthermore, the influence of this poetic figure was not limited to Tibetan scholars of *snyan ngag* but extended to yogis writing *mgur*. Therefore it is not surprising that we find an example of a contiguous initial *yamaka*, or other types of *yamaka*, in the songs of Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

My second example of a poetic figure in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* is also of contiguous initial *yamaka*, but this time the group of letters and their repetition occur in the final foot of the line. Part of Mgur XI-18 exemplifies this principle:

ཆོས་མདོ་རྒྱུད་སྙིང་པོ་**བསྡུས་བསྡུས་**པ། །
དོན་ཉམས་ལེན་གྱི་སྙིང་དུ་**དྲིལ་དྲིལ་**བ། །
གཞུང་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་ཁྲིད། །
སེམས་ཐོག་མེད་ནས་དམུ་རྒོད་**གྱོང་གྱོང་**བ། །
འདི་འདུལ་ཕྱིར་དུ་ཉིན་མཚན་ཁོར་ཡུག་ཏུ། །
གནས་དབེན་པར་གཅིག་དྲིལ་**བྱེད་བྱེད་**ལ། །
ཉམས་རྟོགས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་**ཆེས་ཆེར་**འཕེལ། །[29]

My metrical divisions are as follows:

ཆོས་	མདོ་རྒྱུད་	སྙིང་པོ་	**བསྡུས་བསྡུས་**པ། ।
དོན་	ཉམས་ལེན་གྱི་	སྙིང་དུ་	**དྲིལ་དྲིལ་**བ། ।
གཞུང་	བྱང་ཆུབ་	ལམ་གྱི་	རིམ་པའི་ཁྲིད། ।
སེམས་	ཐོག་མེད་ནས་	དམུ་རྒོད་	**གྱོང་གྱོང་**བ། ।
འདི་	འདུལ་ཕྱིར་དུ་	ཉིན་མཚན་	ཁོར་ཡུག་ཏུ། ।

[28] On the seven stages of transmission of the *Kāvyādarśa* into Tibet (six of which occurred before Skal ldan rgya mtsho's time) that were brought about by successive stages of evaluation, and on the numerous commentaries to the *Kāvyādarśa*, see van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra," 396-97.

[29] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 277/ 245.

གནས་ དབེན་པར་ གཅིག་དྲིལ་ **བྱེད་བྱེད་**ལ། །
ཉམས་ རྟོགས་པའི་ ཡོན་ཏན་ **ཆེས་ཆེར་**འཕེལ། །

As for the one who **collected intensively** the essence of Buddhism, sutras and tantras,
The one who **compiled intensively** meaning in addition to memorizing verses,
The **very** furiously **stubborn one** from beginningless time
[Who] thinks about the instruction of the text, *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*,
In order to tame this one, day and night incessantly
[He] **performs intensively** the combination of practices that are to be done in a hermitage and
The qualities of experiential knowledge become **greater and greater**.

In the example above, as in the previous example, the repetitions belong to the same semantic unit. But this time they are in the last subdivision of the line, and more importantly, this time the repetitions do not form recognized compounds themselves, other than *ches cher*. Instead, most are repetitions of single verb stems or of an adjective, done for the purpose of emphasizing the good quality of the actions taken.[30] The repetition of the adjective, *gyong ba*, intensifies its sense.[31] Hence, first, the subject of the excerpt above had to strive well to make progress, since he was so very stubborn. But finally, now that he practices so well, the fruits of his endeavors are greater and greater.

Daṇḍin illustrates his concept of contiguous initial *yamaka* in the fourth foot in verse III.7:

Araṇyaṁ kaiśchid ākrāntam anyaiḥ sadma divaukasām/
Padātirathanāgāśvarahitai rahitais tava/ /[32]

[30] See Uray on verb stem repetition, where he states that the duplication can indicate "a prolonged, multiplicate duration of a process or a state" or it can indicate "a multiplicate, higher intensity than the average or again a full intensity," in "Duplication, Gemination and Triplication in Tibetan," 194.

[31] Uray states that the repetition of an adjective stem leads to "an increased degree of a property or circumstance" in "Duplication, Gemination and Triplication in Tibetan," 193.

[32] For the readers' amusement, I will give Belvalkar's translation of verse III.7 in *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin*, 52:

We recall that Daṇḍin defined a stanza pattern as having four quarters (*pāda*). His example has eight syllables per quarter. In the edition above, no divisions are delineated between the first and second, and between the third and fourth quarters. Hence there are sixteen syllables per line. The fact that the first *rahitai* falls on the ninth syllable of the second line means that it comes at the beginning of the fourth quarter, and is therefore a contiguous initial *yamaka* in the fourth foot.

Again, it must be emphasized that in the application of Daṇḍin's various subcategories of *yamaka* in *mgur* (with its own varieties of stanza patterns, sentence lengths and metrics), liberties may be taken and adaptations are necessary. Even so, the patterns in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* reveal themselves as consistent with the *Kāvyādarśa*.

The third poetic figure based on the *Kāvyādarśa* is one in which the second and third syllables are the same, though they belong to different compounds. An excerpt from Mgur V-16a illustrates this pattern:

མ་**གྲོས་གྲོས་**པར་རློམ་པ་དེས། །
ཡར་**ཚེས་ཚེས་**པ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ལ། །
མི་**ཚོས་ཚོས་**སུ་བསྒྲུར་ནས་ནི[33]། །
དུས་**ངན་ངན་**སེམས་ལྡན་པའི་མི། །
འདུལ་བའི་ཕྱིར་དུ་ཡི་གེར་བཀོད། །[34]

Since according to Tibetan prosody, a compound cannot extend across two subdivisions, I have used spaces to indicate where the syllables divide, in order to make it clear that the two syllables that look alike belong to different syntactic units. The metrical units here are made up of 2 + 2 + 3 syllables:

Deprived of foot-soldiers, chariots, elephants and horses your enemies have, some of them, repaired unto the forest and others unto the abode of the gods.

[33] *ni* CD; *na* AB.

[34] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 113/ 101. Three lines of Mgur VI-9, p. 133, exhibit the same property.

མ་**ཐོས་** **ཐོས་**པར་ རློམ་པ་དེས། །
ཡར་**ཚེས་** **ཚེས་**པ་ བཅུ་གཉིས་ལ། །
མི་**ཆོས་** **ཆོས་**སུ་ བསྒྱུར་ནས་ནི། །
དུས་**ངན་** **ངན་**སེམས་ ལྡན་པའི་མི། །
འདུལ་བའི་ ཕྱིར་དུ་ ཡི་གེར་བཀོད། །

My translation reflects the repetition of the syllables:

On the twelfth **day** of the **days** of the waxing moon,
Having transformed popular **religion** into [divine] **religion**
In order to discipline people who have **evil** minds in an **evil** age,
The one haughty in **learning**, [yet] never having **studied**
Put this down in writing.

Thos can mean both to learn and to study.

The poetic figure above is also a form of *yamaka*. Though there is no verse in the *Kāvyādarśa* that illustrates exactly the pattern above, it is a simplification of the pattern in verse III.47 that J. F. Eppling has symbolized as follows. I adopt Eppling's symbols for denoting the repetitive patterns of Daṇḍin's verse:

Kāvyādarśa verse III.47:

[A___A/A___A/A___A/A___A] [35]

Skal ldan rgya mtsho Mgur V-16:

[____A/A_____/_____/
[____A/A_____/_____/
[____A/A_____/_____/
[____A/A_____/_____/
[_____/_______/_____]

This pattern is not peculiar to Skal ldan rgya mtsho in Tibet. Don grub rgyal describes it as an example of *'dres pa'i rgyan*, a subcategory of *bya dka' ba'i rgyan* (one of his two major subdivisions of *sgra rgyan*), along with an example.[36]

[35] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 211.
[36] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 536-37.

Fourth, several of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* show a feature in which the last syllable of one line is the first syllable of the next, as the petition and introduction to Mgur II-4 illustrate:

> དྲིན་ཕུལ་བྱུང་སྡེ་པ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་**རྗེ**། །
> **རྗེ**་མཉམ་མེད་ཐུབ་དབང་ལྷ་ཡི་**ལྷ**། །
> **ལྷ**་ཡི་དམ་རྒྱལ་པོ་བདེ་བ་**མཆོག** །
> **མཆོག**་ཐུན་མོང་དངོས་གྲུབ་བདག་ལ་སྩོལ། །
>
> དུས་ཉིན་ཞིག་[37] འཁོར་ལོ་སྡོམ་པའི་**གནས**། །
> **གནས**་ཁྱད་འཕགས་གཉའ་གོང་བྲག་གི་**འདབས**། །
> **འདབས**་སྤང་ལྗོངས་སྙིང་དུ་འཆག་པའི་**ཚེ**། །
> **ཚེ**་འདིར་ཞེན་སྒོམ་པས་གླུ་འདི་ལེན། །[38]

> Sde pa Chos kyi **rje**, who gave me kindness,
> **Lord**, the unrivalled Mighty one, the **deity** of deities,
> D**eity**, tutelary deity, king, the **highest** bliss,
> Please bestow upon me the **highest** and the common spiritual powers.
>
> [On this] day [at] the dwelling-place of 'Khor lo sdom pa,
> The especially noble **place**, the **side** of Gnya' gong brag,
> Since [I] am contemplating attachment to this **life**,
> **As** [I] tread on the grassy **surface**, [I]'m singing this song.

As can be seen by my formatting in bold, sometimes the respective parts of each pair of sound-alikes are in fact the same word, and other times they are homophones. There is an additional set of homophones, the "*sde*" of Sde pa Chos rje's name and the "*bde*" of *bde ba*, the happiness or bliss with which he is equated.

Within one of the familiar cycles of conversations with insects, Mgur IV-2, there is a section which illustrates this same poetic figure. It is the opening song to the cycle of conversations between Skal ldan rgya mtsho and the lice, fleas and lice eggs. Skal ldan rgya mtsho is threatening the insects who have bitten him:

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[37] *zhig* B; *cig* ACD.
[38] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 26/ 23.

ཁྱེད་ཉོན་ཅིག་དལ་བུར་འགྱོན་པའི་**ཤིག** །
ཤིག་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་བདག་གི་ལུས་ལ་**ཟོས**། །

ཟོས་འཐུངས་ཚེ་ཁྱོད་ནི་སྐྱིད་ན་**ཡང**་། །
ཡང་བདག་གིས་མཐོང་ཚེ་ཁྱོད་ཅི་**བསམ**། །

བསམ་མེད་པའི་ལྗི་[39] བ་ལྡིང་མཁས་**ཁྱོད**། །
ཁྱོད་སྐུ་སྤྱོད་འདི་དང་མ་བྲལ་**ན**། །
ན་གཞོན་རིང་དྲི་[40] ཤིར་འགྲོ་དོགས་**འདུག** །

འདུག་མི་འདུག་ཡང་ཡང་ཟ་དང་**གསལ**། །

གསལ་དཀར་ཞིང་འཛུམ་པའི་སྒྲོ་མང་**ཁྱོད**། །
ཁྱོད་བལྟས་ཚེ་སྨུ་རིག་འདྲ་ན་**ཡང**་། །
ཡང་བདག་གི་གོས་རྣམས་སློད་[41] མཐོང་**ཚེ**། །
ཚེ་ཕྱི་མ་མི་དྲན་ཁྱོད་བཅོམ་འདོད། །[42]

Listen you **lice** who are roaming about—
You **lice** have **eat**en my body!

Even if you are happy when you **eat** and drink,
When [I] see you, what do you **think**?[43]

You **thought**less fleas, skilled in flight,
If you are inseparable from what your body does,
During **youth** you were afraid of smells going "rrrrr."[44]

True or not, continue eating, and **be clear** about it!

[39] *lji* CD; *'ju* AB.
[40] *dri* AC; *gri* BD.
[41] *slod* AB; *lhod* CD.
[42] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 68/ 61. Another example of the same poetic figure occurs in the second through fifth lines of Mgur V-22, 118/ 106.
[43] I have not translated the *yang* at the beginning of the line. It is there to complete the poetic figure (last syllable of one line is the same as the first syllable in the next line), but does not seem to fit in terms of meaning. The meter is 1 + 2 + 2 + 3, so *bdag* is the subject, and is not part of a compound with *yang*.
[44] This seems to mean dying through pollution, because the young fleas know no better than to be attracted to disgusting, foul stuff.

> **You bright** white and smiling louse eggs,
> **Even if** [you] are like pearls when **you** are looked at,
> **When** [I] see [my] contaminated garments,
> Without thinking of [my] next **life**, [I] want to kill you.

The fact that this *mgur* has a slightly forced nature suggests that this poetic figure is very difficult to carry out. The example above is not entirely successful, since the first syllable in the next to last line, *yang*, does not have a real place in the sense of the line.

This subdivision of *yamaka* is called *saṃdaṣṭa yamaka*, "where repetitive sound elements are (literally) 'bitten or held between the teeth'."[45] Daṇḍin describes it in verse III.52 of the *Kāvyādarśa*:

> Upoḍharāgāpyabalā madena sā Madenasā manyurasena yojitā/
> Na yojitāmānam anaṅgatāpitāṅgatā'pi tāpāya mamāsa neyate/ /[46]

Eppling diagrams this pattern of repetitions as follows:

> [___A/A___B/B___C/C___] [47]

This is a pattern that occurs in three of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*. In addition to Mgur IV-2a, cited above, it is used in Mgur II-4 and in Mgur V-22.

In my fifth example which shows influence from the *Kāvyādarśa*, Mgur V-8, every line begins with the same syllable.[48] In Skal ldan rgya mtsho's quest to give others advice, the first syllable, *bde*, is used with a variety of meanings:

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[45] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 212.

[46] Belvalkar translates verse III.52 in *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin*, 61, as follows:

> That lady, although full of passion excited by intoxication, was yet thrown into angry-mood in consequence of my lapses; and so, although all her limbs were scorched by Love, she would not join her body [with mine]: that caused me immeasurable affliction.

[47] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 213.

[48] For another example of a *mgur* whose lines frequently begin with the same syllable, see Mgur VIII-27, in which eight out of the first twelve lines begin with *sems*.

བདེ་མཆོག་གི་ངོ་བོ་བླ་མ་དང་། །
བདེ་ཆེན་གྱི་དཔལ་སྟེར་ཧེ་རུ་ཀ། །
བདེ་ལྡན་གྱི་གནས་ནས་རྟག་ཏུ་གཟིགས། །

བདེ་ཉམས་ཀྱི་གླུ་དབྱངས་འདི་ལྟར་འཐེན། །

བདེ་ལེགས་ཀྱི་རྩ་བ་བླ་མ་ལ[49]། །
བདེ་བླག་ཏུ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པ་འདི། །
བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཀྱི་ཉི་མ་འཆར་ཐབས་སུ། །
བདེ་གཤེགས་ཀུན་མཐུན་པར་ཡང་ཡང་གསུངས། །

བདེ་སྟེར་གྱི་ཐབས་མཆོག་དམ་པའི་ཆོས། །
བདེ་ལེགས་ཀྱི་ལམ་རྟེན་དལ་འབྱོར་ལུས། །
བདེ་མེད་ཀྱི་འཁོར་བར་རྙེད་དཀའ་བས། །
བདེ་སྡུག་ལ་མ་ལྟ་སྙིང་པོ་ལོངས། །

བདེ་བ་ནས་བདེ་བར་འགྲོ་བསམ་ན། །
བདེ་མཆོག་སོགས་ཡི་དམ་བསྙེན་སྒྲུབ་དང་། །
བདེ་སྡུག་སོགས་ཆོས་བརྒྱད་མགོ[50]སྙོམས་དང་། །

བདེ་བ་ལ་འགྲོ་ཀུན་འགོད་འདོད་སོགས། །
བདེ་བླག་ཏུ་བསྒྲུབས་ན་ཅིས་ཀྱང་ལེགས། །[51]

The lama, essence of **Bde mchog** and
He ru ka, who bestows the glory of **great bliss**
Please look [upon me] always from **Bde ba can**.

[I]'ll sing accordingly a song of **blissful experience**.

This **happy** petition to the lama, the root of **well-being**,
Has been said over and over in harmony with
All those who **have entered into eternal bliss**,
As a means for the sun of **happiness** to shine.

49 *la* ABC; *las* D.
50 *mgo* CD; *'go* AB.
51 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 100-101/ 90.

Because it is difficult to obtain a body, a good foundation, the path of **well-being**
[And the path for] the holy religion, the most supreme means for giving **happiness**,
In samsara, where there is no **happiness**,
Without regard for **happiness** and suffering, obtain the essence.

If [you] are thinking[52] of going from **happiness** to happiness,
Recite the mantras and propitiate the tutelary deities such as **Bde mchog**, and
Equalize the distinctions of the eight worldly *dharma*s, such as **happiness** and suffering.

If [you] have easily established **happiness** [through] the desire to transfer all beings into a **happy state**, and so on,
By all means [your happiness] is good.

In this *mgur*, Skal ldan rgya mtsho emphasizes the idea of happiness (*bde ba*) over and over, by repeating its first syllable, *bde*, at the beginning of each line.[53] A lovely feature of this poem is the tension between the emphasis on happiness through the constant repetitions of *bde*, and the advice to go beyond the dichotomy of happiness and suffering. In the end, Skal ldan rgya mtsho concedes that if one has established happiness easily through desiring it for others, then one's own happiness is good.

It is apparent that *bde* has a variety of grammatical functions here. For example, *bde* is sometimes followed by another syllable, forming a union which is itself a single word (i.e. *bde mchog*, *bde legs*, etc.). Sometimes the two syllables together form an abbreviation (i.e. *bde gshegs*, for *bde bar gshegs pa*). At other times, *bde* is followed by a syllable which qualifies it (i.e. *bde med*), and so on.

The pattern above is described by Daṇḍin in verse III.29. I have broken it into *pāda*s to show the pattern clearly:

Kamaleḥ samakeśaṃ te
Kamalershyākaram mukham/

[52] I have interpreted *bsam*, the future stem, in the present, according to the sense here.
[53] In Chapter 10 I will present an example of a *mgur* in which *bde* is used repeatedly at the end of each line.

Kam alekhyaṁ karoshi tvaṁ
Kamalevonmadisṇushu/ / [54]

Eppling diagrams this poetic figure as follows:

[A___/A___/A___/A___] [55]

Niyama

With my sixth example which shows influence from the *Kāvyādarśa*, I move away from *yamaka* to another major branch of Daṇḍin's verbal figures, *niyama*. In Mgur XI-9 there are no vowel signs, and hence the only vowel present is "a." Below is an excerpt from the song, all of whose sixty-four lines employ this poetic figure:

བླ་མ་སངས་རྒྱས་སྲས་བཅས་ལ། །
བསམ་པ་ཐག་པས་སྐྱབས་བཅས་ན། །
རང་དང་གཞན་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ། །
རྟག་པར་ཕན་པར་མཛད་པ་ལགས། ། [56]

Of course my translation will demonstrate nothing about the poetic figure, but I will provide it anyway, to show how well the language flows.

Taking refuge with the rope of [one's] intention
In the lama and the Buddha, together with his sons,
Is doing perpetual benefit
For oneself and all others.

Here there is a constant interchange between the various pronunciations of the vowel "a," determined by what letters follow it in a syllable. The constant repetition of these pronunciations of the

[54] Belvalkar translates verse III.29 in *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin*, 56, as follows:

Your head has hair like the bee, and your face is the cause of jealousy to the lotus: whom would you—even like the goddess of Wealth—make un-included amongst persons liable to be intoxicated?

[55] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 206.
[56] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 263/ 233.

vowel "a" throughout the entire eighty-four lines gives me a sense of flow and ease.

This figure belongs to a group of figures Daṇḍin calls *niyama* (Tib.*: dbyangs dang gnas dang yi ge rnams kyi nges pa*),[57] or "phonemic restriction." He explains this group as follows:

> The restriction of vowels, *sthāna*s,[58] or consonants to four or less is
> considered difficult to achieve—These will now be shown.
> Otherwise a stanza is easy to compose.[59]

We are dealing with the subcategory of *svara*, or vowel restriction, here. In the most difficult case of restriction to a single vowel, the vowel prescribed for use by Daṇḍin is "a."[60]

Belvalkar transliterates and translates Daṇḍin's example of this poetic figure as follows:

> Sāmāyāmā māyā māsā Mārānāyāyānā rāmā
> Yānāvārārāvānāyā Māyārāmā mārāyāmā

> The lady who is [more] beautiful than Lakshmī, who inflicts a long dole of affliction, and whose approach is the harbinger of Cupid:
> that bewitching-damsel who spreads out a snare in the form of the jingling of the anklets upon her treading-foot is—along with the moon—meant for [men's] destruction.[61]

Like Daṇḍin, Skal ldan rgya mtsho acknowledges the difficulty of carrying out *niyama*, which he refers to as "*bya dka' ba'i mdzes rgyan*"[62] (a beautiful ornament which is difficult to compose). Yet Skal ldan rgya mtsho shows great mastery in the skill of writing a *mgur* with vowel restrictions, as the fluidity of Mgur XI-9 demonstrates.

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[57] Banerjee, *Kāvyādarśa: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts*, xiv.

[58] Eppling defines *sthāna*s as physical points of verbal articulation in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 229.

[59] Daṇḍin, verse 3.83, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 229.

[60] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 230.

[61] Daṇḍin, verse 3.87, transliterated and translated by Belvalkar in *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin*, 68-69.

[62] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, colophon to Mgur XI-9, 264/ 234.

PRAHELIKĀ

My last example also shows the influence of Daṇḍin's larger category of verbal figures upon Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*. In Mgur I-7, Skal ldan rgya mtsho has dispersed the syllables of his name among the lines. Here is the opening beseechment:

ན་མོ་གུ་རུ་མཉྫུ་གྷོ་ཥཱ་ཡ[63]། །

སྐལ་བཟང་རྣམས་ལ་ལེགས་བཤད་བདུད་རྩི་སྩེར། །
ཁྲིམས་**ལྡན་**དམ་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་རྗེས་སུ་འཇུག །
བཤད་སྒྲུབ་བསྟན་ཕན་འཕྲིན་ལས་**རྒྱ་**ཆེན་མངའ། །
གཞན་ཕན་**མཚོ་**ལྟར་རྒྱས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས། །[64]

[I] prostrate myself before the guru, Mañjuśrī.

[I] give the nectar of good explanations to the **fortunate** ones.
[I] enter into the traces of the stories of liberation of the holy ones who **possess** precepts.
[I] have **vast** activities for benefiting the teaching of explanation and practice.
[I] beseech [you] to spread benefit to others more and more, like a **lake**.

Daṇḍin places the poetic figure demonstrated above in the general category of *prahelikā*[65] (Tib.: *gab tshig*),[66] or "riddle," of which there are sixteen varieties. The particular type of riddle that Skal ldan rgya mtsho employs above is *vyutkrāntā* (Tib.: *rim pa bral ba*), or disjointed riddle. Daṇḍin says it "creates confusion through the employment of [related words] excessively separated."[67] Belvalkar transliterates, analyzes and translates Daṇḍin's example of this type of riddle:

[63] *sh'a ya* ABD; *shya* C.
[64] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 12-13/ 11.
[65] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 232.
[66] Banerjee, *Kāvyādarśa: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts*, 247.
[67] Daṇḍin, 3.99, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 236.

3 11 1 8 2
Daṇḍe chumbati padminyā hañsaḥ karkaśakaṇṭake

9 6 7 10 4 5
Mukhaṁ valguravaṁ kurvaṁs tuṇḍenāṅgāṇi ghaṭṭayan.

The swan, rubbing his limbs against the stalk of the lotus-plant
which has a rough, hairy exterior, and giving out a sweet note,
kisses with his beak the [plant's] face.[68]

As we have seen in some of the previous examples, Skal ldan rgya mtsho's examples of some of the poetic figures of the *Kāvyādarśa* are simpler than those given by Daṇḍin. In this case, Skal ldan rgya mtsho keeps the syllables of his name in order, whereas Daṇḍin's syllables are jumbled. Furthermore, Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of the disjointed riddle is quite natural and causes none of the confusion Daṇḍin associates with this poetic figure. One would not suspect that Skal ldan rgya mtsho is using a poetic figure here, as the poem flows naturally. The disjointed syllables of his name would not be noticed if it were not for the small circles placed above or below the syllables, in several editions.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho does not seem to be making any contrived or showy attempt to use the disjointed riddle. Rather, the use he makes of it is consistent with the overall tone of this *mgur*. Though he is the subject of the opening verse, this is not specified, and when his name appears, the syllables are spread out, not compact. He asks his lama to bring more and more benefit to others, like the increasing waters in a lake (*mtsho*), lake being the last syllable of his name. In this stanza there is a sense that Skal ldan rgya mtsho is reaching outward to other people. This expansion outward from oneself to others is very much a Buddhist ideal.

In this chapter, we have seen five types of repetitions (*yamaka*), one kind of phonemic restriction (*niyama*), and one type of riddle (*prahelikā*) in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*. These features most clearly show the influence of the category of verbal figures, as classified by Daṇḍin in his third chapter of the *Kāvyādarśa*. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but to give an indication of the types

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[68] Daṇḍin, 3.110, transliterated, analyzed and translated by Belvalkar in *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin*, 72.

of figures Skal ldan rgya mtsho employs. In the next chapter, I will show other types of poetic figures that he uses that have no connection with Daṇḍin.

CHAPTER TEN

POETIC FIGURES
II. INDIGENOUS TIBETAN POETIC FIGURES

Now that we have looked at poetic figures (*rgyan*) used by Skal ldan rgya mtsho that show influences from the *Kāvyādarśa*, we turn next to other figures that he uses that were not inspired by Daṇḍin's text. Don grub rgyal uses the term *rgyan* for all poetic figures, regardless of their origin. For the purpose of this chapter, I shall be following his guidance, and will expand the definition of *rgyan* I used in the last chapter. Here *rgyan* will refer to poetic figures along a wider spectrum: from those inspired by Daṇḍin through those that may show an overlap of influences (both from the *Kāvyādarśa* and from indigenous Tibetan poetry) to those that have nothing to do with the *Kāvyādarśa*.

In this chapter, my identifications of several poetic figures used by Skal ldan rgya mtsho are based on Don grub rgyal's examples, which he puts forth in his section, "*Mgur rang gi rgyan*," "*Mgur*'s own ornaments."[1] He strongly warns against assuming that *snyan ngag* in Tibet has been written in accordance with the *Kāvyādarśa*:

> ད་ལྟ་རང་རེའི་སློབ་མཐུན་མི་ཉུང་བ་ཞིག་གིས་སྙན་ངག་ཅེས་པ་ནི་"མེ་ལོང་"མའི་གཞུང་ལྟར་བརྩམས་པའི་ཚིགས་བཅད་ལ་གོ་བ་ལེན་པ་ནི་གུ་དོག་པོའི་བསམ་བློ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པ་དང་། བསམ་བློ་གུ་དོག་པོའི་ངོས་འཛིན་དེ་ལས་"མེ་ལོང་"མའི་གཞུང་དེ་བོད་ལ་མ་དར་གོང་དུ་བོད་ལ་སྙན་ངག་མེད་ཅེས་ཟེར་བ་ནི་ཤིན་དུ་མི་འོས་པའི་གནས་ཤིག་རེད།[2]
>
> Nowadays not few of our fellow students think that "*snyan ngag*" means verses composed according to the *Kāvyādarśa*. This understanding is narrow-minded. According to that narrow-minded identification, before the *Kāvyādarśa* spread in

[1] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 531-35.
[2] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 347.

> Tibet, there was supposedly no poetry in Tibet. [This] is a very inappropriate position.

He finds the position of his fellow students laughable because there certainly was poetry in Tibet before the spread of the *Kāvyādarśa* there in the thirteenth century.

Don grub rgyal may have reason to take his not-so-few comrades to task for keeping their sights so focused on the *Kāvyādarśa* in order to judge the legitimacy of Tibetan poetry. Is this what Daṇḍin himself would have proposed? Here I will remind the reader of the second half of Daṇḍin's verse that completes his definition of poetic figures (*alaṃkāra*s):

> Even today [poetic figures, *alaṃkāra*s] are being postulated—
> Who could completely describe them?[3]

Although Daṇḍin describes in painstaking detail the many poetic figures (and their many subtypes) that he deals with in the *Kāvyādarśa*, he quickly acknowledges that there will always be more. Don grub rgyal himself has postulated a number of new poetic figures that he found in Tibetan poetry. This puts him even more in accord with Daṇḍin's visions than those comrades he finds fault with, who evaluate Tibetan poetic figures on the basis of whether they were written in accordance with Daṇḍin's text.

Don grub rgyal is emphatic that *mgur* needs certain poetic figures described in the *Kāvyādarśa*, which he lists below:

> གཞན་ཡང་། གསལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་དང་། བསྐོར་བའི་རྒྱན། བསྡུས་བརྗོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱན། སྤྱོད་པའི་རྒྱན། ཕུལ་བྱུང་གི་རྒྱན། རབ་རྟོག་གི་རྒྱན། རིམ་པ་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱན། རྒྱ་ཆེ་བའི་རྒྱན། ལྷན་ཅིག་བརྗོད་པའི་རྒྱན་རྣམས་ཀུང་མགུར་གླུ་ལ་མཁོ་མོད།[4]

> Moreover, the poetic figures *dīpaka alaṃkāra, āvṛtti alaṃkāra, samāsokti alaṃkāra, vibhāvanā alaṃkāra, atiśayokti (atiśaya) alaṃkāra, utprekṣā alaṃkāra, yathāsaṃkhya (saṃkhyāna/krama) alaṃkāra, udātta alaṃkāra,* and *saṃsṛṣṭi (saṃkīrna) alaṃkāra* are indeed also needed in *mgur*.

[3] Daṇḍin, II.1, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 333.

[4] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 530.

All these poetic figures are found in the second chapter of the *Kāvyādarśa*, which deals with semantic relationships.[5] But Don grub rgyal warns against overemphasizing the application of Daṇḍin's figures to Tibetan poetry:

> ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་ཞེ་ན། མགུར་གླུ་ནི་ངག་འཇམ་ཞིང་གོ་བདེ་བའི་རྩོམ་རིག་ཅིག་ཡིན་པས། ཁ་ཏྲ་ཅང་དམ་པ་དང་རྒྱན་དཀའ་བ་རྣམས་ལ་སྦྱར་ན་མགུར་གྱི་རྩོམ་ཉམས་དང་བྱེད་ནུས་ཉམས་འགྲོ་བའི་རྐྱེན་གྱིས་སོ།[6]
>
> Why? Since *mgur* is an eloquent and easily understood [form of] literature, if [one] composes poetic figures that are very tight-lipped and difficult [to comprehend], the composition of *mgur* and the ability to do [it] will decline.

Don grub rgyal reminds us that the *Kāvyādarśa* made a summary of the practices of composing the *snyan ngag* of India which was based on two types of composition (that of southern and eastern India), and was, apparently, in harmony with the characteristics of society, the period and the ethnic groups. But, Don grub rgyal says that harmony is not possible in Tibet.[7] All people have their own oral poetry with its particular characteristics, and the Tibetans are no exception. Don grub rgyal describes his theory of the origin of *mgur* in order to illustrate his point:

> བོད་ལ་ཆ་མཚོན་ན་ཡང་། ཐོག་མར་བོད་རང་གི་ཁྱད་ཆོས་དང་ལྡན་པའི་གླུ་ཡོད་པ་དང་། གླུ་དེ་དག་ནི་བོད་རིགས་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཐོན་སྐྱེད་ངལ་རྩོལ་གྱི་ལག་ལེན་ཁྲོད་ནས་བྱུང་བར་མ་ཟད། ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཀྱི་དུས་སྐབས་སོ་སོར་འཕེལ་རྒྱས་བྱུང་སྟེ་ད་བར་སྙན་ཞིང་ཡིད་འཕྲོག་པ་དང་། ཉམས་དང་འགྱུར་བ་དུ་མ་དང་ལྡན་པ། རྒྱན་སྣ་ཚོགས་པས་ཕྱུག་

[5] Daṇḍin's descriptions of these poetic figures are in verses II.97, II.116, II.205, II.199, II.214, II.221, II.273, II.300, and II.351 of the *Kāvyādarśa*; and are translated and discussed by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 671-82, 727-29, 926-32, 911-15, 948-56, 972-79, 1081-84, 1174-79, and 1348-50, respectively. For Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit names, see the index to Banerjee, *Kāvyādarśa: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts*. (His numbering system of the verses is a bit different.)

[6] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 531.

[7] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 525 and the entire section of Chapter One (*Gzhung 'di'i yan lag gi skor*) entitled *Mgur dang snyan ngag gi dbye ba rob bsdus*, 343-51.

པའི་རྩོམ་རིག་གི་རྣམ་པ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གྱུར་ཏེ་བོད་རིགས་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ནང་དུ་ས་ཁྱབ་རྡོ་ཁྱབ་ཏུ་སོང་ཡོད་.......[8]

> For example, in Tibet in the beginning there were songs which had Tibet's own characteristics, and those songs arose from the practice of production [and] labor of the Tibetan people, and they developed over individual periods of history, and the people were happy when they heard them. That which was melodious and charming, with many moods and changes, became a kind of rich literature by means of various poetic figures......

Don grub rgyal laments the fact that there has never been a tradition of scholarship of Tibetan indigenous poetry, but states that it would not be hard to establish one.[9] This is a task that he sets out to accomplish in the second part of his seventh chapter (*Mgur gyi rgyan gyi skor*) entitled *Mgur rang gi rgyan*, *Ornaments of Mgur Itself*, in which he illustrates and discusses poetic figures that belong to *mgur* itself (and not to the *Kāvyādarśa*).

I have adopted Don grub rgyal's identification of poetic figures that involve sequences of numbers and those that involve interjections, and will show examples of these figures from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs in the fifth and sixth sections of this chapter below. My fourth section will deal with the continual repetition of the same finite verb at the end of each line of verse. But before embarking on these three sections, each of which describes features of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's poetic figures that are not found in the *Kāvyādarśa*, I will start with sections on the simile, metaphor and parallelism, respectively, in which influences of Daṇḍin and of indigenous Tibetan poetry may be seen to overlap, and show why my discussion of these figures belongs in this chapter and not in the previous one.

[8] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 348-49.
[9] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 349.

1. Similes

There are a variety of similes in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*. One may wonder whether some have been influenced by the *Kāvyādarśa* or whether they are truly indigenous. Sometimes it seems that there may be an overlap of influence, and it is not clear whether Skal ldan rgya mtsho is using a particular form because of Daṇḍin's influence or is acting independently. Let us look at some of the similes most often used by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, after which I will discuss the question of their origin.

The similes that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses that are indicated by such words as *bzhin, ltar, lta bu, 'dra and mnyam* frequently draw on simple images from everyday life as analogies. The following list is arranged in terms of frequency of use:

at least 15 occurrences	
chu bo'i rgyun, chu rgyun	flow of a river
at least 10 occurrences	
char ltar 'bab, char bzhin 'bab	fall like rain
zla	moon
mig 'bras ....srung	protect like an eyeball
at least 5 occurrences	
bu	son
me mur 'obs, me yi 'obs, me mur gyi 'obs, me 'obs, me 'bar ba'i 'obs, me ma mur gyi 'obs	fiery pit
mgal me'i 'khor lo	a torch circling around
at least 2 occurrences	
me	fire
me tog	flower
mda'	arrow
dril	bell
nam mkha'	sky
khyi	dog
'brug	thunder
bdud rtsi	nectar
mtsho	lake

nyi zla	sun and moon
ri mo	painting, drawing
snum zad mar me	butter without oil
chu dang chu rdo	water and water stone
chu ltar khol	boil like water
mgal me	firebrand, torch
ne tso	expound religion like a parrot
ri, ri bo	mountain
rnga	drum
gser	gold
glog	lightning
bya spu	plumes of a bird
at least 1 occurrence	
chu yi chu bur	channel of water
rgya mtsho	ocean
zla zer	moonlight
pad dkar	white lotus
nor bu	precious stone, jewel
yid bzhin nor bu	wish-fulfilling jewel
mu tig	pearl
nyi ma shar	sunrise
mar me	butter
'o ma mang yang mar med	milk without butter
rlung	wind
lo tog	crop
ri dwags	wild animal
ne tso'i gzhog pa	parrot's wing
sa rdo	stone made of earth
lag stong du rang yul 'gro	return home empty-handed
srog	life

From the list above, we see that over two-thirds of the similes are things found in nature, and less than one-fourth are man-made. I will make an examination of how the eight most commonly used similes are used. The fact that two of the most frequently used similes in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum*—the flow of a river and the fall of rain—involve water, emphasizes his awareness of the scarcity of that element in his area of Amdo, which makes it particularly precious there.

like the flow of a river

This simile is most frequently used to refer to striving, exerting one-self to practice religion. Here is an excerpt from Mgur IV-4:

ཆོས་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་ཚུལ་མ་ཤེས་ན། །
གནས་རི་ཁྲོད་འགྲིམས་ཡང་སྡུག་བསྔལ་ཡིན། །

སྐབས་ད་ནས་སྒོམ་རྒྱུའི་ཟབ་ཁྲིད་ལ། །
བརྩོན་**ཆུ་བོའི་རྒྱུན་ལྟར་**བསྟེན་པར་མཛོད། །[10]

If [you] did not know how to practice religion,
Although [you] went to a mountain retreat, [the experience] would be [one of] suffering.

From now on, rely on effort in the deep instructions for preparing for meditation
Like the flow of a river.

Some of the similes which involve the flow of a river use the verb *sten*, to rely on, as in the example above.[11] One must rely on effort in carrying out the instructions, as one relies on a river. Both are crucial: relying on the instructions is crucial for practicing religion, and relying on a flowing river is crucial for crops, animals and human consumption.

The verb that this simile is most frequently associated with in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* is *sring*, to extend, stretch.[12] Here is an example of this usage in Mgur V-13:

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[10] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 72-73/ 65.

[11] For other examples of the simile, like the flow of a river, used with a form of the verb *sten*, to rely on, see Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 216, 261. (Page numbers for lists of examples in this section correspond to edition C.)

[12] For other examples of the simile used with a form of the verb *sring*, to extend, stretch, see Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 106, 156, 167, 211, 288, 290, 306, 317, 322, 327, 337, and 360.

....
མཚན་ཡོངས་གྲགས་ཆོས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
དུས་ཁོར་ཡུག་ཐུགས་དམ་རིམ་པ་ལ། །
བརྩོན་**ཆུ་རྒྱུན་ལྟ་བུར་**སྲིང་བའི་དྲུང་། །
བདག་སྐལ་ལྡན་མཇལ་དུ་འོངས་པའི་ཚེ། །
ཕ་བླ་མའི་བཀའ་དྲིན་ལེགས་དྲན་པའི། །
ངག་གླུ་དབྱངས་སྙན་མོ་འདི་ལྟར་འཐེན། །[13]

....

When I, Skal ldan, came to meet

Chos pa Rin po che, whose name is famous everywhere,
[And] who extends [his] effort in the stages of [his] tutelary deity
To the outmost limit of time **like the flow of a river**,
In remembrance of the good kindness of Father Lama.
[I] sang in this way a well-sounding song.

The nuance is a bit different in this example, though the passage uses the same simile with the same object, effort or exertion. The use of the verb *sring*, to extend, creates a parallel between the length of the river and the length of the extension of Chos pa Rin po che's effort. One extremely long river near Skal ldan rgya mtsho's homeland is the Yellow River, which has its source in Amdo and then flows across China.

In this excerpt from Mgur VIII-24 which we saw in Chapter 4, the simile has a different twist again, since it refers to preserving an experience. Here is the last stanza:

འོ་འོ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་ལྟ་བ། །
ཨུ་གོ་བས་མི་ཆོག་སྒོམ་དགོས། །
ཁོ་རེ་**ཆུ་བོའི་རྒྱུན་ལྟར་**སྐྱོངས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །[14]

[13] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 106/ 95.
[14] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 193/ 170-71.

’O ’o, The view of *Mahāmudrā* must be meditated upon.
A’u, It’s not enough to understand it!
Kho re, Guard it **like the flow of a river**.
He he, The mind is happy and glorious! Get it?

This is a rare case in Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s *Mgur ’bum* where the simile does not involve relying on or extending effort, but guarding. What is to be guarded is the view of *Mahāmudrā*, which cannot be held on to conceptually. In this case, the emphasis is on energy and movement. Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s advice is to preserve the flow of the meditative experience, which is like the flow of a river, precious but never something one can hold on to.

fall like rain

This simile is used to refer to things that have come to Skal ldan rgya mtsho in abundance, usually the spiritual powers (*dngos grub*, *siddhi*s),[15] as in Mgur III-2:

བླ་མ་ནི་བཀའ་དྲིན་མཆོག་ཏུ་ཆེ། །
མོས་གུས་ཀྱིས་སྙིང་ནས་གསོལ་བཏབ་ན། །
གང་འདོད་ཀྱི་དངོས་གྲུབ་**ཆར་ལྟར་འབབ**། །[16]

The lama’s kindness is very great.
When [I] have petitioned [him] with respect from the heart,
Whatever spiritual powers [I] desire **fall like rain**..

In tantric Buddhism, the lama is viewed as the source of all things. Through the grace engendered by petitioning his lama, spiritual powers fall like rain upon Skal ldan rgya mtsho. The powers that he desires come to him uncontrollably, in a torrent.

The simile can also be used causatively as in the next example from Mgur V-14:

[15] For other examples of the simile used with spiritual powers, see Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 80, 234 and 291.
[16] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 34-35/ 31.

རྗེ་བཀའ་དྲིན་གསུམ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དང་། །
ལྷ་འཁོར་ལོ་བདེ་མཆོག་ལ་སོགས་པའི། །
སྐྱབས་བསླུ་མེད་དཀོན་མཆོག་རིན་ཆེན་གྱིས། །
ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བས་བདེ་ལེགས་**ཆར་ལྟར་ཕོབ**། །[17]

The infallible refuges, the Precious Jewels,
The lord lama with the three kindnesses
And the deity, ’Khor lo bde mchog, and so on—
Please cause well-being to **fall like rain**, through [your]
compassion!

In this case, the deity and the lama are petitioned to cause the rain of well-being to fall, while at the same time there is a sense of the uncontrollable nature of the flow from the point of view of the recipient. As in the last example, there is a connotation of an abundance of something good coming to the one who supplicates.

Here is another example of the simile, this time used with respect to material possessions,[18] from Mgur XI-22:

ང་ཡུན་རིང་རི་ཁྲོད་འགྲིམས་འགྲིམས་པས། །
ནོར་དངོས་པོ་ཆེད་དུ་མི་གཉེར་ཡང་། །
དུས་ད་ལྷ་བསོད་ནམས་རྒྱས་དྲགས་[19]པས། །
ནོར་དངོས་པོ་གང་འདོད་**ཆར་ལྟར་བབས**། །

ཚེ་སྔ་མའི་བག་ཆགས་ཤུགས་[20]དྲག་པས། །
ནོར་མི་འདོད་བྱས་ཀྱང་འདོད་པས་གདུང་། །
རི་མཐོན་པོར་གཅིག་པུར་[21]སྡོད་ནུས་ན། །
ཆོས་གང་བྱས་ལམ་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་ངེས། །[22]

Because for a long time I wandered around mountain hermitages,
Although [I] do not take pains [to acquire] wealth and goods,

17 Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 109/ 97.
18 For other examples of this simile used with material possessions, see Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 204 and 321-22.
19 *drags* CD; *drag* AB.
20 *shugs* BCD; *shug* A.
21 *pur* ACD; *bur* B.
22 Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 284/ 251-52.

Now at present [my] merit has increased fiercely.
So wealth, goods, whatever is desired, **have fallen like rain**.

Because of the strong power of inclinations from [my] past lives,
Though not having caused a desire for wealth [in this life], [I] am afflicted by desire.
When [I] am able to stay alone on a high mountain,
Whatever teaching [I] practice is sure to take [me] on the path.

As in the last case, because of doing something good (petitioning his lama, increasing merit, ...) desirable things come to him involuntarily, like the fall of rain. But in this case, what he gets through his merit—wealth and goods—are things he does not want. He feels afflicted and wants to go to a hermitage to cleanse himself.

In the following case from Mgur VII-5, his tears fall like rain, this time in response to his poor behavior:

སྔོན་གཞོན་དུས་མི་དགེ་སྡིག་ལ་འཛེམ། །
ད་ལོ་རེ་སོང་གིན་སྡིག་ལ་འཇུག །
འདི་དྲན་ཆེ་མཆི་མ་**ཆར་ལྟར་འབབ**། །
བདག་འདི་རུ་མི་སྡོད་རི་ལ་འགྲོ །[23]

Before, when [I] was young, I avoided[24] unvirtuous sin.
This year having passed, [I] enter into sin.
When [I] recollect this, tears **fall like rain**.
[I] won't stay here. [I]'m going to the mountains.

The same simile, falling like rain, can also be used in reference to evil.[25]

[23] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 142/ 126.

[24] Though Skal ldan rgya mtsho has used the present stem of the verb, I have translated it in the past, since the line is introduced by *sngon*.

[25] For the use of this simile with respect to evil falling like rain, see Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 130 and 343.

increase like the moon

Most similes that involve the moon in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* have to do with increasing a good quality.[26] The following example is from Mgur XII-13:

> མགོན་སངས་རྒྱས་སྲས་དང་བཅས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས། །
> དུས་ཉིན་མཚན་ཀུན་ཏུ་[27] བུ་བཞིན་སྐྱོང་། །
>
> ཉམས་རྟོགས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀུན། །
> དུས་ཡར་ངོའི་**ཟླ་བཞིན་གོང་དུ་འཕེལ**། །[28]
>
> The protector, the Buddha, together with [his] sons
> (= bodhisattvas)
> Are taking care [of me] like a son, all day and all night.
>
> Each and all qualities of experiential knowledge
> **Increase** [in me], **like the waxing of the moon**.

This excerpt is part of a description of what happened after Chos pa Rin po che passed away, and the blessings that came to those who were present at his death. There is a sense of steadiness and inevitability in the increase of the qualities of understanding within Skal ldan rgya mtsho, because of the grace of this event.

My next example, from Mgur XII-30, combines the use of the sun as a metaphor with the moon as a simile:

> དེང་སང་ལྷོ་ཕྱོགས་འཛམ་གླིང་། །
> བསྟན་པའི་ཉི་མ་ཤར་ནས། །
> སྐྱེ་དགུ་རྣམས་ལ་ལེགས་ཚོགས། །
> **ཡར་ངོའི་ཟླ་ལྟར་**[29] **འཕེལ་**འདུག །[30]
>
> These days [in] the southern Jambudvīpa-world
> The sun of the teaching shines, and

---

[26] For other examples than those cited here, see Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 13, 127, 319 and 325.
[27] *tu* BCD; *du* A.
[28] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 313/ 277.
[29] *ltar* ABC; *bzang* D.
[30] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 330/ 292.

> Good accumulations[31] **have increased** in all sentient beings
> **Like the first fortnight's [waxing] moon**.

First comes the sun (the teaching). After the sun comes the moonlight (good accumulations in all sentient beings), a reflection of the sun. Here the increase is again because of the grace of the existent teaching.

As a final example, I offer this excerpt from Mgur XI-9:

> མཚན་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དམ་པ་རྣམས། །
> བསམ་པ་དད་པས་རངས་བྱས་ན། །
> ཕན་དང་དགའ་བ་དཔག་དཀའ་བ། །
> **ཉ་རྒྱས་ཟླ་ལྟར་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱས།** །[32]

> When [one] paid respect with faithful thoughts
> To the holy lamas possessing the defining characteristics,
> [His] immeasurable benefit and joy
> **Increased like a waxing moon.**

Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho has used a form of the verb *rgya* instead of *'phel*, though their meanings are similar. His choice is dependent on the fact that this entire *mgur* is written with a poetic figure from the *Kāvyādarśa* that I discussed in the last chapter. The figure is called *bya dka' ba'i mdzes rgyan*, and since no vowel signs are allowed in its employment, the only vowel present in any syllable is an "a." Again the increase of benefit comes about through the grace of something higher than the recipient, in this case the lamas.

take care of like an eyeball

This simile is used to convey the utmost importance in preserving vows, duties, rules (*dam tshig, sdom pa, khrims, bslab sdom, bcas mtshams*).[33] Here is an excerpt from Mgur III-8:

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[31] This refers to the two accumulations of wisdom and merit.

[32] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 263/ 232.

[33] For other examples of the simile, take care of like an eyeball, see Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 49, 99, 211, 300, 304, 309, 315, 317 and 334.

....
དྲན་ཤེས་བག་ཡོད་བཟང་པོས། །
བསླབ་སྡོམ་**མིག་འབྲས་ལྟར་བསྲུངས**། །
འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པའི་ཁྲུ་མཆོག །
བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
..............[34]

....
Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan,
The supreme leader who adheres to the *Vinaya* and
Has preserved like an eyeball what was to be practiced and vows,
Through good, firm recollection and wisdom..........

The simile is usually used either to give advice or to describe someone's adherence to the rules.

like a son

This simile most often has the sense of protecting or thinking of someone like a son.[35] Here is an example from Mgur X-12:

ཆོས་ཆོས་བཞིན་བྱེད་པའི་མི་དེ་ལ། །
མགོན་སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་སེམས་**བུ་བཞིན**་དགོངས། །[36]

The protector, the Buddha, [together with his] disciples
Think of that person who acts in accordance with religion **like a son**.

The agent is most often the Buddha, a bodhisattva or lama, and the recipient is someone who has done something to be worthy of their fatherly care. Here is another example which we saw above in another context. It is from Mgur XII-13:

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[34] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 46/ 41.
[35] For other examples of the simile, like a son, see Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 20, 26, 160, 244, 270 and 290.
[36] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 229/ 202.

མགོན་སངས་རྒྱས་སྲས་དང་བཅས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས། །
དུས་ཉིན་མཚན་ཀུན་ཏུ་[37] **བུ་བཞིན་**སྐྱོང་། །[38]

The protector, the Buddha, together with bodhisattvas
Takes care [of me] **like a son**, all day and all night.

watch it like a fiery pit

This usually refers to the dangers of samsara that need to be watched constantly like a fiery pit.[39] This is from Mgur IV-8:

འོ་འོ་སྤྱིར་ནི་གཏིང་ཟབ་འཁོར་བ། །
ཨའུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཡ་རེ་ང་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་**མེ་ཡི་འོབས་ལྟར་ལྟོས་དང་**། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །[40]

Oh yeah! In general, deep samsara
Hey you! is very frightful. Hey!
Hey! **Watch it as if it is a fiery pit!** Hey!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

like a torch circling around

This simile is most often used by Skal ldan rgya mtsho to refer to the act of going around in samsara.[41] Here is an example from Mgur VIII-3:

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[37] *tu* BCD; *du* A.
[38] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 313/ 277.
[39] Other examples of this simile used in reference to samsara are in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 19, 46 and 346.
[40] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 78/ 70.
[41] For other examples of the simile, like a torch circling around, used in reference to going around in samsara, see Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 166, 179 and 189-90.

སྤྱིར་ཁམས་གསུམ་གྱི་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་། །
སྒོས་[42] རང་ཅག་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ང་ར་འཛིན་གྱིས། །
གནས་ཁམས་གསུམ་འཁོར་བའི་ཁྲོན་པ་འདིར། །
ཕར་**མགལ་མེའི་འཁོར་ལོ་ལྟ་བུར་**འཁོར། །[43]

In general, all the sentient beings of the three realms, and
In particular, us as well, through grasping onto "I"
In this well of samsara of the three realms,
Are generally going around **like a circling torch**.

burn like fire

This simile is usually used by Skal ldan rgya mtsho in the sense of diligence burning like fire.[44] Here is an example from Mgur II-3, an autobiographical *mgur* written at Rong bo monastery in 1647:

གྲོགས་མཁས་མང་འདུ་བའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་གྲྭ། །
དཔལ་བྱང་རྩེ་ཐོས་བསམ་གླིང་མཆོག་དུ། །
ཕ་འཇམ་དབྱངས་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཆོས་འཕེལ་དང་། །
བཀའ་བཅུ་ཕྲག་སྨྲ་བའི་དགེ་བའི་བཤེས། །
མཚན་བློ་གྲོས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་བྱ་བ་གཉིས། །
ལོ་གསུམ་ཙམ་བསྟེན་ནས་བསླུས་སྦྱོར་ལ། །
བརྩོན་**མེ་ལྟར་འབར་**བས་ཞུགས་པར་སྦྱངས། །[45]

At the supreme, glorious Byang rtse thos bsam gling,
The religious school in which many scholars and [spiritual]
friends assemble,
[I] studied for about three years with two [teachers]:
The father 'Jam dbyangs tshul khrims chos 'phel, and
The one named Blo gros rnam rgyal,
A spiritual friend who speaks of the ten difficult texts.

[42] *sgos* CD; *dgos* AB.
[43] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 171/ 151.
[44] Other examples of the simile, burn like fire, used in reference to exertion are in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 97 and 308.
[45] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 23/ 20.

Then [I] studied well, because the urge for debating **was burning like fire**.

While that which burns like fire is usually something good (exertion), it can also be something undesirable, as in this excerpt from Mgur II-5:

དུས་རྒྱུན་དུ་ཡོན་བདག་གྲོང་ཆོག་མཁན། །
ཝ་ལུང་སྟོང་འགྲིམ་[46] འདྲའི་སྒོམ་ཆེན་ང། །
ནང་འཇིག་རྟེན་ཆོས་བརྒྱད་**མེ་བཞིན་འབར**། །[47]

Inside me, the yogi, who wanders like a fox in one thousand valleys
Continually performing village rites for patrons for [my] living,
Inside, the eight worldly *dharma*s **burn like fire**.

Similes Skal ldan rgya mtsho indicates with the word *'dra* are sometimes more complex and unusual than the ones we have seen above. The following excerpt from Mgur XI-15 will illustrate this point.[48] Each of the four-line stanzas in the body of the *mgur* ends with the finite verb stem, *'dra* (to be like), and involves a comparison of two extensive nominal clauses:

དྲིན་ཅན་གྱི་བླ་མ་སངས་རྒྱས་སུ། །
ཡིད་ཆེས་ཀྱི་དད་པས་མི་བསྟེན་པར། །
བྱིན་རླབས་དང་ཡོན་ཏན་རེ་བ་དེ། །
ས་བོན་ནི་མེད་པའི་ལོ་ཐོག་[49] **འདྲ**། །

དལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་མི་ལུས་ཐོབ་དུས་འདིར། །
དམ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་སྙིང་པོ་[50] མི་ལེན་པ། །

46 *'grim* ACD; *'grims* B.
47 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 29/ 25.
48 For another example of similes with *'dra* that involve more complex comparisons, see Mgur XI-16, pp. 271-72.
49 *thog* AB; *tog* CD.
50 *po* ACD; *bo* B.

རིན་ཆེན་གྱི་གླིང་སོང་ཚོང་པ་རྣམས། །
ལག་སྟོང་དུ་རང་ཡུལ་འགྲོ་དང་**འདྲ**། །[51]
etc.

The hope of blessings and qualities
Without relying with the faith of belief
On a benevolent lama and the Buddha
Is like a crop which has no seeds.

Not receiving the essence through the holy religion
In this time of obtaining a human body of leisure support
Is like merchants who had gone to an island of jewels
Going [back] to their homeland empty-handed.
etc.

Now that we have looked at the similes that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the most, and several more unusual ones as well, I will investigate where his influence may have come from. First, let us consider the *Kāvyādarśa*. Anyone who has read this treatise on *snyan ngag* cannot help but be in awe of Daṇḍin's explanation of his thirty-two types of *upamā*, sometimes translated as simile. *Upamā* is the first figure that Daṇḍin describes in the major category of his second chapter: semantic figures that involve the embellishment of figurative or indirect speech. His discussion of the thirty-two types fills fifty-one verses. Daṇḍin's definition of *upamā* is as follows:

Where - - variously - - similarity
is clearly seen - -
There is the *alaṃkāra* called *Upamā*.
Its scope will not be described.[52]

A reading of Daṇḍin's many types of *upamā* will quickly reveal that his poetic figures under that general heading encompass the Western notion of simile, but include many other notions as well. Most revealing are his particles, words and expressions that indicate similarity in *upamā*s, listed in verses II.57 to 65. He heads the list with a number of words that can be translated as "like," and

[51] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 271/ 240.
[52] Daṇḍin, II.14, translated by Eppling in *A Calculus of Creative Expression*, 408.

"similar," indicating to me (as his examples also do) that his main interpretation of *upamā* is precisely what we term simile in the West. But as his list progresses, we see that other particles and words that he identifies as indicating similarity in *upamā*s, such as "on the opposite side," "enemy," "opponent," "reflection," "blame," "torment"; and phrases such as "He robs his beauty" and "He associates with him," take us far from our familiar notion of the simile.[53] Hence, I follow Eppling's guidance in arguing against translating *upamā* as "simile" (as well as against translating *rūpaka* as "metaphor") because some aspects of *upamā* do not have the correspondences typical of the Western concept of simile. Moreover, in the West the simile is a limited subspecies of metaphor, while in India the reverse is true: *upamā* is the central figure, and *rūpaka* is defined as a subtype of it.[54]

One of the thirty-two types is called "*Upamā* of Objects." Daṇḍin defines it and gives examples in Verse II.16:

> Your face is like a lotus
> Your eyes like lilies - -
> Where the common attribute is just implied
> This is the *Upamā* of Objects.[55]

This is one of the types of *upamā* that we can truly refer to as "simile." And this is the only type of *upamā* that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses in any systematic way in his songs. As we have seen above, he draws comparisons between nouns, and his similes are indicated by such words as *bzhin*, *ltar*, *lta bu*, *'dra* and *mnyam*. But in this regard, has he been influenced by the *Kāvyādarśa*?

Don grub rgyal is right to point out that the simile (*dpe rgyan*) has been used extensively in Tibet:

[53] These examples have been taken from Daṇḍin's list, in Verses II.57-65, translated by Eppling, *A Calculus of Creative Expression*, 575-83.
[54] Eppling, *A Calculus of Creative Expression*, 409-10.
[55] Daṇḍin, II.16, translated by Eppling in *A Calculus of Creative Expression*, 468.

> སྔོན་བྱོན་བོད་ཀྱི་མཁས་པ་དག་གིས་བརྩམས་པའི་མགུར་གླུ་དང་། བོད་རིགས་དམངས་ཁྲོད་ཀྱི་གཞས་ཚིག་རྣམས་ལ་ཞིབ་འཇུག་བྱས་ན། དཔེ་རྒྱན་ནི་རྒྱ་ཁྱབ་ཏུ་བཀོལ་བའི་རྒྱན་ཞིག་རེད།[56]
>
> If one examines in detail the *mgur* written by the former Tibetan experts and the lyrics of folksongs of the Tibetan populace, the simile is a poetic figure which was utilized in every place.

And he points out that the use of the simile in *mgur* and its use in ornate poetry are at times the same and at times different:

> ཡིན་ན་ཡང་། མགུར་གླུའི་སྐབས་ཀྱི་དཔེ་རྒྱན་དང་སྙན་ངག་གི་དཔེ་རྒྱན་གཉིས་ལ་ཐུན་མོང་དང་ཐུན་མིན་གྱི་ཕྱོགས་གཉིས་ཡོད་པ་དང་།........[57]
>
> But the simile in the occasion of *mgur* and the simile in *snyan ngag* have areas that are shared and unshared.

As mentioned, I concede that the way Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the simile is consistent with the way one type of *upamā* is used in ornate poetry. But that kind of simile was already used in Tibet long before the thirteenth century translation of the *Kāvyādarśa*, as the following excerpts of prose and poetry from the Dunhuang documents will show. The following is an example of a simile from Dunhuang with *bzhin*, for making a comparison to the sun:

> འདི་འདྲ་བར་བཀའ་དྲིན་ཆེན་པོ་སྐྱལ་ནས་བོད་འབངས་ཡོངས་སུ་བདེ་བའི་དུས་ནི་**ཉི་མ་བཞིན**་དུ་ཤར་ད།མིན་ཏོག་བཞིན་དུ་རྒྱས་ནས་ཡུལ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དབྱར་མོ་ཐང་དེ་ག་གཡུལ་*གཡུ་ཙལ་དུ།།བློན་ཆེན་པོ་ཞན་ཁྲི་སུམ་རྗེ་དང་ཞང་ཆེན་པོ་ལྷ་བཟང་དང།....[58]

Below we have a simile from Dunhuang with *dang 'dra, 'dra'* and *'dra,* for making comparisons to the sun, the moon, and a great king:

[56] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 527-28.
[57] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 528.
[58] S 0751,41a4-41b1, quoted in Yoshiro Imaeda and Tsuguhito Takeuchi, *Choix de documents tibétains conservés a la Bibliothèque nationale complété par quelques manuscrits de l'India Office et du British Museum. Tome III. Corpus syllabique* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1979), 11. (Henceforth referred to as Imaeda and Takeuchi, *Choix de documents tibétains*.) * is a symbol that Imaeda and Takeuchi use to indicate an alternative or corrected reading.

....
བོད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་རྒྱལ་ནི་**ཉི་མ་དང་འདྲལ།** །
རྒྱ་རྗེ་ནི་**ཟླ་བ་དང་འདྲ་**སྟེ། །
རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེད་པོར་འདྲལ་Ø མོད་ཀྱང། ....[59]

Finally, we have a simile from Dunhuang with *ltar*, for making a comparison to a wish-fulfilling jewel:

.........དང། མཚན་དང་དཔེ་བྱད་བཟང་པོས་བརྒྱན་པའི་སྐུ་**ཡིད་བཞིན་གྱི་ནོར་**
བ་ * **བུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྟར།** སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་རེ་བ་ཡོངས་སུ་བསྐོང་བར་
མཛད་པའི་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་དང་ལྡན་པ་རྗེ་སྐྱིད་བཞུགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་
འཚལ་ལོ། །......[60]

Besides the similes in the Dunhuang documents (from before the early 11th century) that predate the translation of the *Kāvyādarśa* into Tibetan (13th century), we have another indication that the similes such as those quoted from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* are of a form indigenous to Tibet: the same types of comparisons appear in folksongs (*glu*). Though they were not written down until recently, it is known that they have much less Indian influence than *mgur*.[61]

Taking into account the prevalence of the very form of simile that Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses in both Dunhuang material and folksongs, and the fact that he uses only one out of the thirty-two types of *upamā* explained in the *Kāvyādarśa* in any type of systematic way, I conclude that in the case of similes, Skal ldan rgya mtsho's influence came from indigenous Tibetan usage.

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59 P 1287.0516, quoted in Imaeda and Takeuchi, *Choix de documents tibétains*, 37. Ø is a symbol they use to indicate that the next syllable has been restored or added according to context.

60 P OO16.22a2-22a3, quoted in Imaeda and Takeuchi, *Choix de documents tibétains*, 1.

61 Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 369.

2. Metaphors

Metaphors also abound in the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. While I do not profess the following table to be complete, it provides an indication of some of the metaphors in his *mgur*:

	at least 40 occurrences
char	rain
	at least 25 occurrences
bdud rtsi	nectar
	at least 10 occurrences
rgya mtsho	ocean
me tog	flower
	at least 5 occurrences
nyi ma shar	sunrise, etc.
mtsho	lake
mda'	arrow
me	fire
me yi 'obs, me mur 'obs, etc.	fiery pit
me lce	flame of fire
	at least 2 occurrences
chu	water
zla	moon
nor bu	precious stone, jewel
yid bzhin nor bu	wish-fulfilling jewel
ri mo	painting, drawing
dril	bell
ne tso'i gtam/ ne tso'i chos	the religion of a parrot
ri	mountain
rlung	wind
rnga	drum
rta	horse
me long	mirror
sgron me	lamp
ri dwags	wild animal
thang	plain

at least 1 occurrence

nyi zla	sun and moon
zla zer	moonlight
mar me	butter
lo tog	crop
gser	gold
ka ba	pillar
glang po	elephant
lo ma	leaf
gri	knife

Below I will discuss several of the most commonly used metaphors, and then go on to show some of the more rare cases. Finally, I will discuss the origin of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's style of metaphors.

rain of .... falls
cause the rain of ....to fall

One of the most important references deals with rain. As expected in a place that is fairly dry, this metaphor is used almost exclusively to refer to beneficial things, frequently *chos* (religion), *legs bshad* (good explanations) and *dngos grub* (spiritual powers).[62] In Mgur II-2, Skal ldan rgya mtsho petitions the Buddha 'Od dpag med to cause the rain of religion to fall upon him:

བརྩེ་བའི་སྤྱན་གྱིས་བདག་ལ་རྟག་པར་གཟིགས། །
འཛུམ་པའི་ཞལ་བཟང་བདག་ལ་རྟག་པར་སྟོན། །
ཆོས་ཀྱི་**ཆར་བ་**བདག་ལ་རྟག་པར་**ཕོབ**། །
བྱིན་རླབས་བདུད་རྩི་བདག་ལ་རྟག་པར་སྩོལ། །[63]

Please look at me always with loving eyes.
Please always show me [your] good smile.
Please always **cause the rain** of religion **to fall** upon me.
Please always bestow the nectar of [your] blessing on me.

---

[62] Other examples of the metaphor, rain of ..... falls, are in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 13, 15, 34, 37, 42, 43, 45, 48, 50, 51, 71, 77, 87, 92, 98, 102, 127, 128, 132, 136, 149, 243, 270, 272, 283, 285, 306, 317, 352, and 357.

[63] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 20/ 18.

In the example above, this metaphor is used in a petition to a deity. At other times it is used to petition a lama or to acknowledge what a lama has done. The latter is true of Mgur IV-14, which consists of reflections on ways that Skal ldan rgya mtsho misses his lama, Ko'u ba rin po che Chos rgya mtsho, after his death. He adds a deeper layer to the metaphor which relates rain and religion, by drawing a parallel between their sources as well:

བདག་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྐོམ་པས་གདུངས་པའི་ཚེ། །
ཆོས་གང་འདོད་**ཆར་པ་**[64]**འབེབས་**པའི་སྤྲིན། །
དབྱིངས་སྤྲོས་བྲལ་ནམ་མཁར་གློ་བུར་ཡལ། །

བདག་ཆོས་**ཆར་འབེབས་**པའི་སྤྲིན་དང་བྲལ། །
བུ་ཆོས་ཕོངས་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་མི་སྐྱོང་ན། །
ཕས་ལེགས་བཤད་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་[65] སུ་ཞིག་སྐྱོང་། །[66]

When I was afflicted with thirst for religion,
A cloud which **causes the rain** of whatever teachings desired **to fall**
Suddenly vanished in the sky without having spread into the heavens.

As for me, bereft of the cloud which **causes the rain** of religion **to fall**.
If a son does not tend to [his] needs for religion with religion,
Who does [his] father take care of through good explanations and teachings?

In his eulogy in remembrance of K'ou ba Rin po che, Skal ldan rgya mtsho employs parallel metaphors by associating rain with religion, and the rain cloud (the source of rain) with his deceased teacher (the source of religion).

[64] *pa* A; *ba* BCD.
[65] *kyis* ABC; *kyi* D.
[66] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 86-87/ 77-78.

nectar

Bdud rtsi, or nectar, is usually associated with things involving the teaching as well: *gsung* (oral teachings), *legs bshad* (good explanations), *chos* (religion), *byin rlabs* (blessings), and so on.[67] The nectar metaphor is sometimes combined with the metaphor of rain, one after the other as in the first example above, or together, as in the homage to Chos pa Rin po che in Mgur V-13:

ཐུགས་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀུན་དང་མཉམ་ན་ཡང་། །
སྐུ་ངུར་སྨྲིག་གར་གྱི་[68] རྣམ་རོལ་གྱིས། །
གསུང་ལེགས་བཤད་**བདུད་རྩིའི་ཆར་འབེབས་པ**། །
རྗེ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་མཆོད། །[69]

[I] make an offering to lord Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan,
Who, although [his] mind is on a par with all the Buddhas,
Causes the rain of nectar, good explanations of the teachings,
to fall
Through the pleasure of a dance of a maroon-clad body.

In the now familiar soliloquy of the bees to Skal ldan rgya mtsho in Mgur IV-1, they also acknowledge the lama as the source of nectar:

བླ་མ་དམ་པས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་**བདུད་རྩི**་ཡིས། །
རང་ལ་རྟག་ཏུ་ཅི་ཕན་མཛད་པས་ན། །
བཀའ་དྲིན་སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་སེམས་ཀུན་ལས་ལྷག །
གསོལ་བ་རྒྱུན་དུ་[70] ཐོབ་[71] དང་བྱིན་རླབས་འཇུག །[72]

Since the holy lama has brought whatever benefit to you
Perpetually through the **nectar** of religion,

[67] Other examples of the metaphor, nectar, are in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 9, 10, 20, 21, 23, 48, 51, 71, 94, 97, 117, 236, 243, 248, 275, 285, 307, 309, 335, 339, and 357.
[68] *gyi* CD; *gyis* AB.
[69] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 106/ 95.
[70] *du* BCD; *tu* A.
[71] *thob* A; *thobs* BCD.
[72] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 65/ 58.

> Continually make [your] prayers to the lama, whose kindness is even greater than that of all Buddhas and bodhisattvas,
> [His] blessings will enter [into you].

Since the lamas are the source of nectar, the bees say to place them first, before the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

flowers

Besides rain and nectar, flowers are also valuable to Skal ldan rgya mtsho, who lives in a place where the growing season is very short. He associates flowers with *dge sbyor* (accumulation of merit), *snying rje* (compassion), *nyams rtogs* (experiential knowledge), and so on.[73] Flowers are also something he sometimes sings about in a literal sense, while praising the beauty of a solitary place in which he is doing practices. In the first stanza of Mgur XI-20, Skal ldan rgya mtsho personifies the flowers that are physically around him. In the second stanza, they are metaphors:

> དབྱར་སོས་[74] དུས་ཀྱི་དགའ་སྟོན་རྒྱས་འདུག །
> མེ་ཏོག་ཐམས་ཅད་འཛུམ་འཛུམ་གོད་འདུག །
> བྱ་ཚོགས་སྐད་སྙན་དལ་བུར་སྒྲོགས་[75] འདུག །
> ཕྱི་རུ་ཉམས་དགའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་འགྲིགས་བྱུང་། །
>
> ནང་དུ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཉེའུ་གསིང་ཡངས་པར། །
> དད་བརྩོན་ཆར་གྱིས་ལེགས་པར་བྲན་ནས། །
> ཉམས་དང་རྟོགས་པའི་**མེ་ཏོག་**ཤར་ནས། །
> དེ་འབྲས་གཏན་དུ་ཕན་ན་དགའ་བ། །[76]
>
> The feast of spring and summer was copious.
> All the flowers, smiling and smiling, were laughing.

[73] Other examples of metaphors involving flowers can be found in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 51, 71, 76, 217, 218, 260 and 293.
[74] *sos* ABC; *gsogs* D.
[75] *sgrogs* ACD; *sgrog* B.
[76] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 282/ 249.

A flock of birds sang out pleasing tunes leisurely.
Outside, the delightful auspices of [my] undertaking were suitable.

Inwardly, having sprinkled well the wide meadow of [my] mind,
With the rain of faith and diligence,
Flowers of profound experience and intuition arose.
If the result of that [sprinkling] continually benefits [others]—
Oh, joy!

The rain of diligence has allowed flowers of experiential knowledge to spring up on the meadow of his mind. Since the rains have come, he has a fertile base of experiential knowledge from which to draw when expounding religion.

sun rising
sun shining

Skal ldan rgya mtsho frequently associates *nyi ma shar* (sun rising or sun shining) with the state of the teaching in a given place.[77] In Mgur XII-30 he speaks of the teaching in the southern world in terms of the sun shining:

དེང་སང་ལྷོ་ཕྱོགས་འཛམ་གླིང་། །
བསྟན་པའི་**ཉི་མ་ཤར་**ནས། །
སྐྱེ་དགུ་རྣམས་ལ་ལེགས་ཚོགས། །
ཡར་ངོའི་ཟླ་ལྟར་[78] འཕེལ་འདུག །[79]

These days [in] the southern Jambudvīpa-world
The **sun** of the teaching **shines**, and
Good accumulations have increased in all sentient beings
Like the first fortnight's [waxing] moon.

Here the sun of the teaching is reflected as moonlight, and the accumulations of wisdom and merit are increasing in sentient beings like the moon when it is going towards its fullness.

[77] Other examples of the metaphors, the sun rising/ the sun shining, can be found in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 122, 277 and 338.
[78] *ltar* ABC; *bzang* D.
[79] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 330/ 292.

In Mgur V-20, Skal ldan rgya mtsho acknowledges the effect his recently deceased lama, Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho, had in spreading the teaching in Amdo:

ཨ་མདོ་མཐའ་འཁོབ་ཀྱི་ས་ཕྱོགས་འདི་རུ། །
བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཐུབ་བསྟན་གྱི་**ཉི་མ་ཤར**་བ། །
མགོན་པོ་ཁྱོད་ཉིད་ཀྱི་བཀའ་དྲིན་ཡིན་ཡང་། །
བཀའ་དྲིན་མི་དྲན་ཚོའི་སྙིང་ལ་ཅི་ཞུགས། །[80]

Although the **rising sun** of the Mighty One’s teachings of
explanation and practice
In this barbarous area, Amdo,
Is the kindness of only you, protector,
What enters the heart of those who do not recall your kindness?

Here, the image of the rising sun of the teaching makes a contrast with how dark and helpless Skal ldan rgya mtsho feels inside, as a result of the death of his teacher.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho also uses the image of the sun in singing about the spread of Buddhism in Amdo and his delight in it in Mgur XIII-26:

ད་ལྟ་བྱང་ཕྱོགས་ཨ་མདོ་ན། །
སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པའི་**ཉི་མ་ཤར**། །
བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་སྡེ་ནི་ཡར་ཡར་རྒྱས། །
གནས་ཚུལ་འདི་བསམས་ན་ཉམས་རེ་སྐྱི། །[81]

Now in the northern region, Amdo,
The **sun** of Buddha’s teaching **has risen**.
Communities of schools of explanation and practice have increased
more and more.
When [I] have thought of this situation, [my] mind takes only
delight.

As in the previous example, I have again interpreted the verb *shar* to mean rise, rather than shine, since the teachings of the Dge lugs pas

[80] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 117/ 105.
[81] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 359/ 318.

are in the process of coming to Amdo in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's time.

Although the metaphors described above are used in predictable ways, there are also some that are used in more unusual ways. The following is an excerpt from Mgur IV-3. Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the familiar metaphor of rain, but in a surprising way:

བདེན་ཚིག་གི་མེ་ལྕེ། །
ཆོས་གཏམ་གྱི་ནགས་ལ། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་འབར་ཡང་། །
རྫུན་ཚིག་གི་**ཆར་པ**ས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བསད་ཡ། །[82]

Although the flame of truthful words
Burned again and again
In the forest of religious discourse,
[It] was extinguished helplessly
By the **rain** of untruthful speech. Hey!

In all the other examples involving the metaphor of rain quoted or cited above, rain was equated with something positive about religion—*chos*, *legs bshad*, *dngos grub*, *byin rlabs, dge legs*, *dad brtson*, and so on. But here rain is associated with untruthful speech. This marks quite a different treatment of the same metaphor.

Mgur IV-3 is an unusual song in a variety of senses. I have noted it already on several accounts: it is one of the very few *mgur* in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* that have five syllables per line. It is also one of very few that have five-line stanzas. It demonstrates Skal ldan rgya mtsho's conscious effort to use metaphor after metaphor, often in unusual ways. As a final set of examples of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's metaphors, I will present an excerpt from Mgur IV-3. The Tibetan text and my full translation of it are in the appendix.

Oṃ swa sti

Although the flower of good behavior
Was watered again and again

[82] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 71/ 64.

By the river of faith and respect,
[It] was helplessly vanquished
By the hailstorm of laziness. Hey!

Although the sprouts of virtuous thoughts
Were tended again and again
By the warmth of scripture and logic,
[They] were helplessly carried away
By the cattle of wealth-obscurations. Hey!

Although the good horse of faith and respect
Was made to gallop again and again
On the plain of qualities,
[He] got helplessly caught
In the tethering ropes of false knowledge. Hey!

Although the treasury of monastic vows
Was filled again and again
With the jewels of good practice,
[It] was helplessly overthrown
By the thief of carelessness. Hey!

Although the moon of diligence
Appeared again and again
In the sky of hearing and considering,
[It] was helplessly eclipsed
By the planet of indolence.[83] Hey![84]

In this *mgur* we have metaphors from everyday life coupled with Buddhist practices and qualities. Many of the metaphors are taken from nature: inanimate ones are flower, river, hail, sprouts, plain, moon, sky, planet (*Rāhula*), flame, forest, rain, nectar, lake, rock mountain, meadow, lightning, snow mountain, conch and a stone. Animals used as metaphors are both domestic and wild: domestic ones are cattle, horse, and hunting dog; wild ones are fish, deer, tigress and a swan. Other metaphors are man-made items that would have been familiar to Skal ldan rgya mtsho: rope, treasury, jewel,

[83] This refers to an eclipse. The planet is Rāhula.
[84] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 71/ 64.

vessel, hammer, iron hook, silk, pits' arrow, and net. Also we have a reference to a thief.

Finally, I would like to address the origin of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's style of metaphors. As mentioned above, Westerners frequently translate the Sanskrit *rūpaka* by "metaphor." Let us look at how Daṇḍin defines *rūpaka*:

> *Upamā* itself
> —with difference obscured—
> is called *Rūpaka*.
> For example:
> Arm-creeper Hand-lotus Foot-petal.[85]

Daṇḍin derives the *rūpaka* from the *upamā*. With the elimination of the word, particle or expression that expressed similarity in *upamā*, the absolute identity of the two things being compared is established. I am taken by the complexity of the twenty-one types of *rūpaka* that Daṇḍin describes in verses II.67-96.[86] Skal ldan rgya mtsho's poetic figures do not seem to be derived from any of Daṇḍin's subtypes of *rūpaka*.

Don grub rgyal believes that *rūpaka* (*gzugs can*) have an important place in *mgur*, but only if they are eloquent and easily understood:

> གཟུགས་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱན་ཡང་མགུར་གླུ་ལ་ཉེ་བར་མཁོ་བའི་རྒྱན་ཞིག་རེད། ཡིན་ན་ཡང་། སྦྱར་བའི་གཟུགས་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱན་ནི་ཁ་ཅུང་ཟད་དམ་པ་དང་། གོ་ཡང་དེ་འདྲ་མི་བདེ་བས་མགུར་གླུ་ལ་ཉེ་བར་མགོ་[87] བ་ཞིག་མིན།[88]

> Metaphors are also poetic figures that are very much needed in *mgur*. But [when] metaphors are composed in a little tightlipped and also incomprehensible [fashion], they are absolutely not needed in *mgur*.

[85] Daṇḍin, II.66, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 589.
[86] These are described by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 589-670.
[87] Instead, I have read *mkho*, following a suggestion by the scholar Blo bzang chos grags.
[88] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 530.

Probably the awkward poetic figures that Don grub rgyal had in mind while composing the passage above are those written by a composer attempting to comply with Daṇḍin's instructions.

But surely metaphors abound in indigenous Tibetan poetry, and are not typically "tight-lipped," strict, or confusing to the reader. The reader is invited to consult R. A. Stein's book on the Ge sar epic, in which he points to the numerous metaphors and epithets.[89] The metaphors are generally taken from nature, and seem to come from the same source as the metaphors used by such *mgur* writers as Mi la ras pa and 'Brug pa Kun legs. M. Helffer also lists metaphors and where they are found in her transcription of a section of the epic sung by Blo bzang bstan 'dzin.[90]

Furthermore, the flowing style of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Mgur IV-3 above is seen in earlier Tibetan verse, such as in the biography of Mar pa compiled by Gtsang smyon He ru ka around 1505.[91] Compare, for example, this stanza by Skal ldan rgya mtsho:

> Although the good horse of faith and respect
> Was made to gallop again and again
> On the plain of qualities,
> [He] got caught helplessly
> In the ropes of false knowledge. Hey![92]

and the following verse said to come from "the sky" (Nāropa) in Mar pa's biography:

> If the horse of continual devotion
> Is not urged on by the whip of exertion,
> Like the deer of grasping and fixation
> Are you not caught in the trap of reality, wandering in samsara? [93]

And the conclusion of the two stanzas cited above is the same: entrapment.

[89] Stein, *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, 496-98.
[90] Helffer, *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Ge sar*, 393-94.
[91] Nālandā Translation Committee, *The Life of Marpa the Translator: Seeing Accomplishes All*, xxi.
[92] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 71/ 64.
[93] Nālandā Translation Committee, trans., *The Life of Marpa the Translator: Seeing Accomplishes All*, 82.

We have seen many examples of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's metaphors above. Since they do not have any apparent correspondence with Daṇḍin's subtypes of *rūpaka*s and since metaphors abound in the Ge sar epic and in Gtsang mnyon He ru ka's compilations of *mgur* by Mi la ras pa and Mar pa's biography, I would suggest that the likely influence behind Skal ldan rgya mtsho's metaphors is indigenous.

3. Parallelism and Antithesis

Mgur VII-17 exemplifies well a type of poetic figure that we call parallelism in the West. This is a very typical poetic figure used in *mgur*. The full translation and Tibetan text are in the appendix.

རྗོན་པ་ཁྲི་ཁྲིད་ནི་སླེབས་[94] བྱུང་། །
ཤ་བ་སྨྱུག་པོ་ནི་འགྲོས་སོ། །
རྫ་རི་མཐོན་པོ་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

ང་རྒྱལ་སེང་གེ་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
ཡོན་ཏན་རི་བོང་ནི་འགྲོས་སོ། །
ཁེངས་[95] སྐྱུངས་[96] བྲག་ཕུག་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

བྱ་ཁྲ་སྡིག་ཅན་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
འདབ་ཆགས་བྱིའུ་ནི་འགྲོས་སོ། །
ཤིང་ནགས་འཐུག་པོ་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

………………

[94] *slebs* CD; *sleb* AB. I have chosen *slebs*, the perfective of *sleb*, to coincide with the perfective tense of the auxiliary that follows it. This recurring pair of spelling variants between the editions occurs in the first line of each stanza throughout the poem. I will mark the existence of variants only in this stanza.

[95] *khengs* BCD; *kheng* A.

[96] *skyungs* ACD; *bskyungs* B.

སྐྲ་དཀར་སོ་བ་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
སྤྲང་རྒན་དབང་ཆུང་ནི་འབྲོས་ས། །
རི་ཁྲོད་དབེན་པ་ནི་བཟང་ངོ་། །[97]

The hunter, leading a dog, arrived.
The place of refuge for the dark bay stag,
A high clay mountain, was good.

The proud lion arrived.
The place of refuge for the rabbit of qualities,
A cave for leaving arrogance behind, was good.

The sinful bird of prey arrived.
The place of refuge for the little bird,
A deep forest, was good.

....

The white haired spy arrived.
The place of refuge for the weak old beggar,
A solitary mountain retreat, was good.

In this *mgur*, there are three sets of parallelisms. One of each set occurs in each three-line stanza. They all modify the topics of the last stanza. The perpetrators—the hunter leading a dog, the proud lion, and so on—all modify the spy. The places of refuge—a high clay mountain, a cave for leaving arrogance behind, and so on—are all parallel to the solitary retreat. And those who need to take refuge—the dark bay stag, the rabbit, and so on—are all parallel to Skal ldan rgya mtsho (who is referring to himself as the weak old beggar). Each stanza alludes to what Skal ldan rgya mtsho wants to say. In the final stanza he makes his real point.

This particular pattern of parallelism is also found in a verse by Ko brag pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (b. 1170 or 1182? [98]). Here is an example, translated by Stearns:

[97] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 160-61/ 142-43.

[98] The traditional dates for Ko brag pa are 1182-1261, though Stearns dates him to 1170-1249. See Cyrus Stearns, ed., trans., *Hermit of Go Cliffs: Timeless Instructions from a Tibetan Mystic* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 3.

Watching—watching the Khawo glacier in the upper valley,
the melt-water in the lower valley wasn't noticed.
It's too late for cultivation.

Watching—watching the clay slopes of Rumbu,
the daisies spread on the valley floor weren't noticed.
It's too late to tend the herds.

....

Striving—striving for the aims of this life,
the body aging and approaching death wasn't noticed.
It's too late to practice the divine religion.[99]

Mi la ras pa too may have been fond of parallelism, as indicated by the frequent occurrences of it in Gtsang smyon He ru ka's compilation of his *mgur*.[100] This example was translated by Chang:

The great lioness in the upper snow mountain
Poses proudly on the summit of the peak;
She is not afraid—
Proudly dwelling on the mountain
Is the snow lion's way.

The queen vulture on Red Rock
Stretches her wings in the wide sky;
She is not afraid of falling—
Flying through the sky is the vulture's way.

In the depths of the great ocean
Darts the Queen of fish, glittering;
She is not afraid—
Swimming is the fish's way.

[99] Cyrus Stearns, ed., trans., *Hermit of Go Cliffs: Timeless Instructions from a Tibetan Mystic*, 127.

[100] The existence of parallelisms in Mi la ras pa has also been remarked on by Sørensen, who writes "....antithesis and parallelism, ...a pattern already known from the dynastic period, but perhaps refined here under the influence of the above-mentioned aphoristic literature translated from Sanskrit." See Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 15. The existence of structural parallelisms in Mi la ras pa is also attested by Jackson, who remarks on the existence of parallelism in *glu* and in Mi la ras pa: Mi la ras pa combined items from ancient *glu* ("imagery, structural parallelism and expressive directness") with "Buddhist themes and Indian-inspired metrical schemes." See Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 373.

On the branches of the oak trees,
Agile monkeys swing and leap;
They are not afraid of falling—
Such is the wild monkey's way.

Under the leafy canopy of the dense wood,
The striped tiger roams and swiftly runs,
Not because of fear or worry—
This shows her haughty pride,
And is the mighty tiger's way.

In the wood on Singa Mountain,
I, Milarepa, meditate on Voidness,
Not because I fear to lose my understanding—
Constant meditation is the yogi's way.[101]

A sequence of animals similar to the one above is common in the Ge sar epic. There also, the hero, Ge sar, is compared to them.[102]

Don grub rgyal considers the pattern shown above to be a form of a simile. This must be because Daṇḍin has a subtype of *upamā* (the *upamā* of parallel objects) that has similarities to parallelism found in *mgur*. Daṇḍin defines this subtype in Verse II.46:

Introducing a particular object in one expression
A comparable object follows in another
Generating the cognition of similarity - -
This is an *Upamā* of Parallel Objects.[103]

He follows with an example of it in Verse II.47:

Among kings arising
there's not yet one that resembles you

[101] Chang, trans., *Hundred Thousand Songs*, vol. 1, 82. There are other examples of parallelism in this collection as well. A number of them use the same collection of animals (lioness, tigress, fish and vulture) that are then compared to a human. See Chang, trans., *Hundred Thousand Songs*, 39, 40, 82, 260, 262, 587, 588 and 603.
[102] Stein, *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, 496-98.
[103] Daṇḍin, II.46, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 548.

Indeed, there's not a tree
second to the Pārijāta.[104]

This form of *upamā* is one of the very few described by Daṇḍin that require no particle, word or expression to indicate the similarity. Here, the similarity is made apparent by lining up parallel predicates in parallel sentences.

Clearly, the type of parallelism exemplified above in the *mgur* of both Skal ldan rgya mtsho and Mi la ras pa is much more complex than Daṇḍin's. Their type, found frequently in *mgur* in Tibet, can have any number of parts that all modify the last stanza, whereas Daṇḍin's only has two parts, the second modifying the first.[105] (Nearly all of Daṇḍin's examples of poetic figures are those that fall within the compass of a single stanza, this one included.) Although Skal ldan rgya mtsho's figure certainly has similarities to Daṇḍin's, it would be wrong to assume that his parallelisms were inspired by the *Kāvyādarśa*.

A variety of authors have remarked on the parallelisms in Dunhuang manuscripts, notably Savitsky, who writes of "psychological and rhythmical syntactical parallelisms" (and "phonetic parallelisms") in those documents.[106] Sørensen also remarks on the existence of parallelism in poetry commonly attributed to the Early Diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet.[107] In addition, Jackson also writes about the existence of parallelism in songs (*glu*), as we have seen, which represent "the earliest, most indigenous, most secular, and most orally and musically oriented of the genres [of Tibetan poetry]." [108]

All of this adds up to the fact that parallelism is an indigenous Tibetan poetic figure. Given this fact and the differences between

[104] Daṇḍin, II.47, translated by Eppling in "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 551.

[105] Don grub rgyal has also remarked on this difference in usage between *mgur* and *snyan ngag* in *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 529.

[106] Savitsky, "Secular Lyrical Poetry in Tibet," 406.

[107] Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 13. Sørensen also remarks that parallelism (including antithesis) is frequently found in the poems of the Sixth Dalai Lama. He points out that parallelism is "most regularly employed in order to illustrate, compare, contrast or in order to enforce a concrete object or a statement." The similes or allusions can be in the first or the second couplet of a stanza. See Sørensen, *Divinity Secularized*, 28.

[108] Jackson, "'Poetry' in Tibet," 369.

how Skal ldan rgya mtsho and Daṇḍin use parallelism, it seems that Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of this figure was influenced by indigenous practice.

I will now give an example of a *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's that exhibits what we in the West call antithesis, something not found in the *Kāvyādarśa*. Here is an excerpt from Mgur VII-5:

སྔོན་བླ་མ་བཞུགས་དུས་དད་པ་མེད། །
ད་དད་པ་སྐྱེས་ཚེ་བླ་མ་[109]བྱོན། །
དེ་གཉིས་ཀ་འཛོམ་པའི་[110]དུས་མ་བྱུང་། །
བདག་འདི་རུ་མི་སྡོད་རི་ལ་འགྲོ །

སྔོན་ཆོས་མི་ཤེས་དུས་ཉམས་ལེན་འདོད། །
ད་དམ་ཆོས་ཤེས་ཚེ་ཉམས་ལེན་བརྗེད། །
དེ་གཉིས་ཀ་འཛོམ་པའི་དུས་མ་བྱུང་། །
བདག་འདི་རུ་མི་སྡོད་རི་ལ་འགྲོ །[111]
etc.

Before, when the lama lived, [I] had no faith.
Now at the time that faith has been born, a lama has not appeared.
The time of those two coming together has not occurred.
I won't stay here. [I]'m going to the mountains.

Before, when [I] didn't understand religion, [I] wanted to practice it.
Now at the time that [I] understand the holy religion, [I] have forgotten to practice it.
The time of those two coming together has not occurred.
I won't stay here. [I]'m going to the mountains.
etc.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Mgur VII-10a is similar to the example above in that the first two lines involve antithetical ideas; he has

[109] *bla ma ma byon*, against all readings of ABCD: *bla ma byon*.
[110] *pa'i* ACD; *ba'i* B.
[111] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 142-43/ 126.

again added his conclusion about the present situation—to go into solitary retreat—in the second couplet of each stanza:

ངས་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་བླ་མ་བསྟེན། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་གྲོགས་དང་ཡོན་བདག་བསྟེན། །
འདི་བསམས་ཞེང་ཡི་མུག་གཏིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

ངས་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་ཐོས་བསམ་བྱས། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་གྲོང་ཆོག་རྐྱང་པར་[112]ཡིངས། །
འདི་བསམས་ཞེང་ཡི་མུག་གཏིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །[113]

etc.

When I was young, I relied on a lama.
Now that [I] am old, I have been relying on friends and patrons.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] listened to and contemplated [religion].
Now that [I] am old, [I] perform village rites for a living [and] move to and fro on foot.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.
etc.

As in the two examples above, *mgur* that involve regular patterns of antithesis also tend to have uniform sized stanzas and a certain amount of repetition of words on respective lines from stanza to stanza.

[112] *par* A; *bar* BCD.
[113] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 148/ 131.

4. Continual Repetition of a Finite Verb

Mgur VII-11 involves repetitions of the syllable *bde*,[114] at the end of the lines. I already presented this *mgur* in Chapter 2 on hermitages. Unlike in the example in the preceding chapter where *bde* was the first syllable of each line and sometimes formed part of a compound with the next syllable, the translation of *bde* is uniform here, because it is a finite verb. In each line, *bde* is preceded by a particle indicating a causative syntactical relationship to a prior relative clause. Hence, each of the sixteen lines in this part of the *mgur*, which is autobiographical, has the sense of "Because......., [I] am happy." Here is an excerpt from Mgur VII-11, which is translated in full in the appendix:

ཕུག་དེ་ན་སྐལ་ལྡན་རས་པ་ང། །
ལུས་ངུར་སྨྲིག་གོས་ཀྱིས་གཡོགས་**པས་བདེ**། །
ངག་གླུ་དབྱངས་ལྷང་ལྷང་བླངས་**པས་བདེ**། །
སེམས་སྡུག་བསྔལ་མེད་པར་གནས་**པས་བདེ**། །
ཉིན་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་ཅི་ནུས་བགྱིས་**པས་བདེ**། །
མཚན་གློ་ཕབ་བདེ་བར་ཉལ་**བས་བདེ**། །
དཔོན་དབང་ཆེས་གཉའ་གནོན་མེད་**པས་བདེ**། །[115]
etc.

In that cave, because I, Skal ldan ras pa,
Have covered [my] body with saffron, [I] **am happy**.
Because [I] have sung a sonorous song, [I] **am happy**.
Because [I] have lived without suffering, [I] **am happy**.
Because by day [I] have performed whatever religious practices possible, [I] **am happy**.

[114] Though Skal ldan rgya mtsho repeats *bde* most frequently, there are other *mgur* that repeat other words at the beginnings of their lines to a lesser extent, notably Mgur VIII-27, which repeats *sems* nine times in its first twelve lines.
[115] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 153/ 136.

Because in the night [I] have lain happily on [my] side, [I] **am happy**.
Because [I]'ve not been put in a stocks by a greatly powerful lord, [I] **am happy**.
etc.

Here, the repetitions stress the importance of practice and its relation to achieving happiness. Skal ldan rgya mtsho tells us that because he has acted in certain way, he is happy. He gives sixteen examples of things that he has done or felt that have caused him to be happy. As the repetitions continue, the listener surely has no doubts about Skal ldan rgya mtsho's happiness, and may feel inclined to practice in the same way.

The repetition of *bde* as a finite verb is also found in a number of *mgur* attributed to Mi la ras pa.[116] His use of *bde* in the following excerpt has strong similarities to the way Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses it above:

བདག་ཉེ་དུ་དང་འབྲེལ་ཐག་བཅད་**པས་བདེ**། །
ཕ་ཡུལ་གྱི་ཞེན་པ་སྤྲངས་**པས་བདེ**། །
ཡུལ་སྡེའི་གཉེར་ཁ་མེད་**པས་བདེ**། །
དགེ་འདུན་གྱི་རྫས་ལ་མ་འབགས་**བདེ**། །
ཁང་ཁྱིམ་བདད་དུ་མ་བཟུང་**བདེ**། །
འདི་ལ་འདི་དགོས་མེད་**པས་བདེ**། །
འཕགས་པའི་ནོར་གྱིས་ཕྱུག་**པས་བདེ**། །
etc.[117]

Because I have left my kinsmen, I **am happy**;
Because I have abandoned attachment to my country, I **am happy**;
Since I disregard this place, I **am happy**;
As I do not wear the lofty garb of priesthood, I **am happy**;

[116] For other examples of the theme, to be happy/joyful, with the terminative verb *bde* used repeatedly, see Chang, trans., *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, 70-71, 225-26, 364 and 436-37; for the *mgur* in Tibetan, see Gtsang smyon He ru ka, comp., *Rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999), 252-53, 388-89, 523 and 592, respectively.

[117] Gtsang smyon He ru ka, comp., *Rnal 'byor byi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur*, 281.

Because I cling not to house and family, I **am happy**;
I need not this or that, so I **am happy**.
Because I possess the great wealth of religion, I **am happy**;
etc.[118]

Daṇḍin describes the poetic figure above in verse III.41 as a type of final *yamaka*. I have divided it into its *pāda*s of 12 syllables each, to show the pattern clearly. The repetitions occur in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth syllable of each *pāda*:

Tava priyā'sachcharitā'pramatta yā
Vibhūshaṇaṁ dhāryam ihāṁśumat tayā/
Ratotsavāmodaviśeshamattayā
Na me phalaṁ kiṁchana kāntimattayā/ /[119]

Eppling diagrams the pattern above as follows:

[___A/___A/___A/___A] [120]

It is possible to interpret Skal ldan rgya mtsho's use of this poetic figure as having been influenced by Daṇḍin. On the other hand, the frequency with which the poetic figure is found in *mgur* attributed Mi la ras pa suggests that it is also indigenous to Tibet.

5. Sequences of Numbers

Using words for numbers in particular patterns is a popular poetic figure in *mgur* as well.[121] There is no mention of anything like this in the *Kāvyādarśa*. Here is an example of such a figure in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum*, Mgur V-21. The components of the pattern are formatted in bold.

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[118] Chang, trans., *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, 110.
[119] Belvalkar, *Kāvyādarśa of Daṇḍin*, 58, translates verse III.41 as follows:

That beloved of yours of excellent morals that there is, O shrewd one, by her [when] particularly intoxicated by the joy of your contact is to be worn this dazzling ornament:
No more any advantage unto me by brilliant decoration.

[120] Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 209.
[121] Don grub rgyal provides a couple of examples in *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 532.

དགུ་ཆུ་སྔོན་མོ་དེ་**དང་གཅིག** །
དེ་ལ་འཁོར་བའི་ཉ་མོ་[122] **གཉིས**། །
གནས་སྐབས་དུས་ཚོད་ཀྱི་འབྲེལ་བ། །
ཡུད་ཙམ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གདའ་བ། །
དེ་བཞིན་སྐལ་ལྡན་ང་**དང་གཅིག** །
དེ་ལ་འཁོར་བའི་གྲྭ་ཚོགས་**དང་གཉིས**། །
གནས་སྐབས་དུས་ཚོད་ཀྱི་འབྲེལ་བ། །
ཡུད་ཙམ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གདའ་བས། །
དམ་ཆོས་ཅི་ནུས་གྱིས་ཤིག །   ། །[123]

The blue Dgu chu[124]—**one**;
The fish that go around in [the river]—**two**.
An interrelationship between times and circumstances
Comes about suddenly.

Likewise, I, the fortunate one—**one**;
The disciples who go around that [one]—**two**.
Since an interrelationship between times and circumstances
Comes about suddenly,
Do the holy religion by whatever means [you] have.

This is a form that abounds in the *mgur* of Mi la ras pa. Don grub rgyal cites an example from his *Mgur 'bum*. I have added bold formatting to the similar parts:

ང་དད་པའི་ས་གཞི་བརྟན་**དང་གཅིག** །
བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཀྱི་རྩིག་པ་མཐོ་**དང་གཅིག**[125] །
བསམ་གཏན་གྱི་གྱང་ཞིང་ཆེ་**དང་གསུམ**། །
ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་བད་ཤུར་ལེགས་**དང་བཞི**། །

[122] *dang*, part of the pattern, was omitted in ABCD, in order to preserve the meter.
[123] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 118/ 106.
[124] The Dgu chu is the river that flows through Reb gong near Rong bo monastery.
[125] Instead I read *gnyis* here, part of the pattern.

བཞི་དེ་བཞི་བསྒྲིབས་པའི་མཁར་དཔེ་དེ། །
ནམ་བཞག་གདན་གྱི་མཁར་དཔེ་ཡིན། །[126]

A related poetic figure that also involves a sequence is one in which the lines begin with the numbers, leading up to a sequence on a given topic.[127] Mgur VI-1 includes an example of this:

....
གཅིག་དུ་བླ་མའི་བཀའ་ལུང་སྒྲུབ་པ་དང་། །
གཉིས་སུ་རང་གི་སློབ་གཉེར་འཕྲོ་སྐྱོང་དང་། །
གསུམ་དུ་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཐེག་པའི་བསྟན་པ་ནི། །
ཕྱོགས་འདིར་དར་ཆེད་ཡིན་སྙམ་དགའ་སྤྲོ་སྐྱེས། །[128]

Thinking that **firstly**, practicing the oral instructions of the lama,
Secondly, spreading out and taking care of [my] own students, [and]
Thirdly, the teaching of *Vajrayāna*,
Were for the purpose of spreading [religion] in this area, joy arose [in me].

6. INTERJECTIONS

Don grub rgyal classifies interjections as *mgur*'s own poetic figures, well-suited for the genre. Here he gives a partial list of sounds and interrogative words that can be used for calling out:

འབོད་སྒྲ་ནི། ཀྱེ། ཀྱེ་མ། ཀྱེ་ཧུད། ཀྱེ་ཀྱེ། ཀྭ་ཡེ། ཞྭ་ཡེ། འོ་འོ། ཡ། ཨ་ཨ། ཨའུ། ཁོ་རེ། ཨའེ། ཏ་ཏ། ཏེ་ཏེ། ཡ་ཡེ། ཞེ་སོགས་དང་ཨེ་གོ་ཨེ་རིག་ཨེ་མཐོང་། ཨེ་ཐོས། ཨེ་འདོད། ཨེ་བསམ། ཨེ་སྙམ། ཨེ་དགོས་ལ་སོགས་པའི་འདྲི་ཚིག་འབོད་སྒྲ་ཅན་ལ་སྦྱར་བའི་རྣམ་པ་མང་པོ་ཡོད།[129]

[126] *Mgur 'bum* of Mi la ras pa, quoted in Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 532.
[127] Don grub rgyal gives many examples of *mgur* whose lines begin with numbers that form a sequence in *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 532-34.
[128] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 123/ 110.
[129] Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 531.

> There are many types of composition of sounds for calling out, such as *kye, kye ma, kye hud, kye kye, kwa ye, wa ye, 'o 'o, ya, a a, a'u, kho re, a'e, ha ha, he he, ya yi, we*, and so on; and interrogative words, such as *e go, e rig, e mthong, e thos, e 'dod, e bsam, e snyam, e dgos*, and so on.

Many of these, and others, are found in the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. They express such attitudes as blame, scolding, wonder, joy, embarrassment, doubt, fear and so on. In this section I will look at these various sounds one by one, give examples of how he uses them and postulate what they seem to mean. Of course interjections could better be left untranslated, but just for fun I will offer what one might call out, if they were in English.

a me

As seen in the first three stanzas of Mgur IV-9 and throughout, *a me* introduces an action that Skal ldan rgya mtsho is going to criticize. The entire translation can be found in the appendix.

ཨ་མེ་བླ་མ་བསྟེན་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
བྱིན་རླབས་དངོས་གྲུབ་དོན་ལ་**ཧ་ཧ**། །
རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་ལ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཨ་མེ་མི་ཚེ་གཟད་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
ཕྱེ་མར་བདེ་འགྲོའི་དོན་ལ་**ཧ་ཧ**། །
སྡིག་ཅན་འཆི་ཀར་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཨ་མེ་འཆི་བདག་བཏུད་[130] ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
ཆེ་སྒྲོག་བཏན་པའི་དོན་ལ་**ཧ་ཧ**། །
མི་མང་འཆི་ཚུལ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །[131]

etc.

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[130] *btud* ACD; *btul* B. I have chosen *btu*d, the pf. of *'dud*, in the sense of "*thag je nyer song ba*," through communication with the Rong bo scholar Blo bzang chos grags.

[131] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 79/ 71.

Oh my—this way of having relied on a lama
For the benefits of blessings and spiritual powers! **Uh huh!**
Look at the pronouncements of the Victorious One, and reconsider it!

Oh my—this way in which you have consumed human life
For the purpose of going to happiness in a future life! **Uh huh!**
Look at [being at] the point of death with sins, and reconsider it!

Oh my—this way of having approached the Lord of Death
For the purpose of a stable life! **Uh huh!**
Look at how many people die, and reconsider it!
etc.

The expression *a me* does not appear in the dictionaries. I have translated it here as "oh my." This is the only *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho that employs this term. Here it is used thirteen times, always at the beginning of a three-line stanza. Since the sounds *a me* and *ha ha* are working together in this *mgur*, I will analyze them together below.

ha ha

Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the expression, *ha ha* in various ways, the most common of which corresponds to the definition of it put forth in the *TTC*. This dictionary translates *ha ha* as *phya smod byed pa'i gad mo*, "laughter which blames/deprecates another."[132] In my translation of the *mgur* above, I have translated it as "uh huh." Here, *a me* introduces an example of some instance of someone using religion in a superficial way, for his own benefit, and *ha ha* expresses a scolding about it. Structurally, *a me* and *ha ha* encompass the first clause of the sentence, which the third line of each stanza completes by making a suggestion as to how to correct these distorted views.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho also uses the expression *ha ha* in a jovial way, as seen in the following excerpt of the first four lines of *mgur* VI-4:

[132] G. Uray refers to *ha ha* as "the natural sound of laughter" in "Duplication, Gemination and Triplication in Tibetan," 198.

ཨེ་མ་ཧོ་སྐལ་བ་[133] བཟང་བ་ལ། །
ཨ་ལ་ལ་ཉམས་ཀྱི་དགའ་བ་ལ། །
འོ་ན་ལ་ལྷ་ཆོས་སྒྲུབ་ནུས་ན། །
ཧ་ཧ་བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཀྱི་ཉི་མ་འཆར། །[134]
etc.

Wow! Fortune is good!
Yay! [Mine] is a happy mind!
’O na la, If [I] am able to practice the divine religion
Ha ha! the sun of happiness will shine!
etc.

It is clear that here, *ha ha* can not have the connotation of scolding or blame, and I have translated it as we may in colloquial English, “ha ha,” a sound of joy. It comes at the beginning of the fourth line of the stanza, and structurally divides the final main clause from its relative clause.[135] I have left the interjection *’o na la* untranslated, since I have no clues as to its precise meaning. The other two interjections used in this stanza will be discussed below.

e ma ho

The expression *e ma ho* introduces the first line of the *mgur* above, and has been translated by the *TTC* as *ngo mtshar che zer ba’i brda*, “an indication/word which expresses great wonder, surprise or astonishment.” Jäschke translates it also as an “interjection expressing joy, surprise, astonishment, hey! hey day! indeed! you don’t say so,” but further gives two more connotations: “in asking, beseeching, requesting a person’s attention: please, pray, I say; of expressive of lamentation, compassion: alas! oh! would to God! O dear!” I have translated the above example of *e ma ho* as a sound of astonishment, here in the colloquial, “Wow!”[136]

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133 *ba* ACD; *pa* B.
134 Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 126-27/ 112-13.
135 Other examples of *ha ha* occur in Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum* V-18 (1x), VII-19 (1x), VIII-4 (1x), VIII-20 (1x), VIII-26 (1x), X-1 (4x), XII-5 (1x), XII-15 (7x), and XII-30 (1x).
136 *E ma ho* is also used in V-7 (1x) and XII-15 (4x).

a la la

The interjection *a la la* has been translated by the *TTC as ngo mtshar ba dang/ dga' ba'i tshig*, "a word of astonishment and joy."[137] G. Uray defines it similarly as "an interjection expressive of joyful surprise," his example being from Mi la ras pa.[138] I have translated it at the beginning of the second line of the Mgur VI-4 above as "Yay!" Structurally, *a la la* comes at the beginning of the second line of the excerpt above and breaks the clause into two parts.

In the following *mgur*, IX-5, *a la la* is used to connote wonderment, and I have translated it as "Wow!"

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ང་ནི།
དབུས་སུ་སློབ་གཉེར་གང་ནུས་བགྱིས་ནས།
ཁམས་ཀྱི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་བསྟན་པ་སྤྱིལ་བས།
ད་ལྟ་སྟན་པའི་གྲགས་པ་འབར་རོ།

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ང་ནི།
ད་ལྟ་རི་ཁྲོད་འགྲིམ་པའི་འཁོར་མང་། །
དེ་ཀུན་ཁ་ལོ་ཆོས་ལ་སྒྱུར་དང་། །
ནམ་ཞིག་རང་དང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་ནོ། །

....

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ང་ནི། །
ནོར་ཡང་མང་སྟེ་ཚོགས་སུ་བསྔོས་སོ། །
ཆོས་ཀྱང་ཤེས་ཏེ་མི་ལ་བཤད་དོ། །
ལོ་ཡང་ལོན་ཀྱང་བདེ་ཞིང་སྐྱིད་དོ། །

ཨ་ལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་པའི་བན་རྒན་ལགས་སོ། །[139]

[137] *A la la* is also commented on by Helffer. She calls it an "exprime l'approbation," an expression of approval, and classifies it as "racine suivie du'une particle redoublée." Helffer, *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Ge sar*, 386. That may be why Stein refers to this interjection as "*a la*," in *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, 494.
[138] Uray, "Duplication, Gemination and Triplication in Tibetan," 198.
[139] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 204-5/ 180-81.

Wow! As for me, an old monk who strolls around the country,
Having done as much study as possible in Dbus,
Because of increasing the teaching in the area of Khams,
Now [my] fame is burning.

Wow! As for me an old monk who strolls around the country,
Now the entourage which roves the mountain hermitages is large.
Steer them all to religion!
When will [I] benefit myself and others?

....

Wow! As for me an old monk who strolls around the country,
[My] wealth also is much, [I] have blessed the crowd.
Religion also [I] know, [I] have explained it to people.
Although [my] years are passing, [I] am well and happy.

Wow! [I] am an old monk who strolls around the country.

In the preceding *mgur*, the interjection comes at the beginning of each four-line stanza. The sense of *a la la*, wonderment, modifies the entirety of each stanza.[140]

a li lo mo a li
a li
a a a li lo mo

These three interjections occur in Mgur VIII-26, which is translated in full in the appendix. The expression *a li lo mo a li*, which is not defined in the *TTC* or in the *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs*,[141] comes initially once every three lines, its span matching the meter of the *mgur* and hence taking up a full line:

[140] Other uses of *a la la o*ccur in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, VII-9 (4x), VII-12 (3x), VII-15 (1x), VII-19 (1x), IX-5 (19x), and XI-8 (1x).

[141] *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1994). However, the existence of similar interjections in the Ge sar epic have been noted by Stein, in *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet,* 494. They include "*a la li la mo la li*; *a ya ya*, cet home merveilleux"; "*a la li la li* ce fils de Brahmā," "*a la la li li la mo li*" and "*a la la li la mo li*, je salue l'ami, le roi de Gesar."

གཉུག་མ་འོད་གསལ་གཤིས་ལ། །
བཟང་ངན་སྒྲོས་པ་མེད་དོ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི། །

སྟོང་ཉིད་རིགས་པས་དཔྱད་ན། །
བདག་འཛིན་ཁོ་ཡང་ཧེ་ཧེ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[142]། །

བདེན་འཛིན་སྟོང་པས་བཀག་ན། །
སུ་འཁོར་གང་འཁོར་ཧ་ཧ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[143]། །

འཁོར་མཁན་མེད་ན་ལས་འབྲས[144]།
རྣམ་གཞག་ཇི་ལྟར་འཇོག་ལགས། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[145]། །

འོན་ཀྱང་སྣང་སྟོང་ངང་ལས། །
ཐ་སྙད་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཞོག་ཡ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[146]། །
etc.[147]

As for the natural disposition of primordial, clear light
There is no generation of good and bad.
A li lo mo a li.

If [one] examines emptiness through reasoning,
Clinging to self, itself also—heeee heeee!
A li lo mo a li.

If clinging to truth is refuted through emptiness,
Who goes around? What goes around? Ha ha!
A li lo mo a li.

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142 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
143 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
144 *'bras* ABD; *'bral* C.
145 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
146 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
147 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 194/ 171.

If there is no agent going around,
How are [we] to put forth an exposition of karma and [its] result?
A li lo mo a li.

Nonetheless, from the state of the luminous void
Transactionally arrange the interdependent origination. Hey you!
A li lo mo a li.
etc.

In my translation of this *mgur*, I have left the expression *a li lo mo a li* as it is. It appears to be a play of sounds on *a li*.

The opening to Mgur VIII-26 above is followed by a section in which *a li* is used frequently:

ཨ་ལི་[148] ཤེས་ན་དགའ་བ། །
སྟོང་ཉིད་ཡིན་ནོ་**ཨ་ལི**[149]། །

ཨ་ལི་བསྟེན་ན་དགའ་བ། །
བླ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ་**ཨ་ལི**། །

ཨ་ལི་[150] བསྲུང་[151] ན་དགའ་བ། །
སྡོམ་པ་[152] ཡིན་ནོ་**ཨ་ལི**། །

ཨ་ལི་བསྡད་ན་དགའ་བ། །
རི་ཁྲོད་ཡིན་ནོ་**ཨ་ལི**། །

ཨ་ལི་ཀཱ་[153] ལི་སྦྱར་ན། །
སངས་རྒྱས་མྱུར་དུ་འཐོབ་བོ། །
etc.[154]

A li. If [you] understand,
Happiness is emptiness. **A li**.

[148] *li* BCD; *yi* A.
[149] *li* BCD; *yi* A.
[150] *a li* BCD; *ā yi* A.
[151] *bsrung* BCD; *gsung* A.
[152] *pa* ACD; *ba* B.
[153] *kā* BCD; *ka* A.
[154] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 194/ 171-72.

A li. If you rely on him,
Happiness is the lama. **A li**.

A li. If you will guard it,
Happiness is the vow. **A li**.

A li. If you remain in it,
Happiness is the mountain hermitage. **A li**.

A li. If [you] join the vowels and consonants,
[You] will quickly obtain Buddhahood.
etc.

From the above excerpt on up to the closing couplet, *a li* introduces each two-line stanza and in the first three cases closes it as well. It literally means "vowels," but functions mainly as a playful interjection here.

The final couplet of Mgur VIII-26 will reveal the only example of the expression *a a a li lo mo* in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, here interspersed with the expression used frequently at the beginning of this *mgur*:

ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི། །
ཨ་ཨ་ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ། །[155]

Together, they round off a *mgur* in which interjections are frequent.

ya

The interjection *ya* ends the last line of each stanza of Mgur IV-3 and its related Mgur IV-7. Don grub rgyal lists it as a calling sound. The *TTC* does not show it as Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses it, but rather as a free-standing interjection, before a sentence, with the meaning of *'gyod nyams kyi tshig*, "a word of regret." The *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* also shows it free-standing, *'bod sgra ste: ya! khyod gang la 'gro?* I have decided to translate it as "Hey you!" or "Hey!" Here is an excerpt from Mgur IV-3:

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[155] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 194/ 172.

བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཀྱི་ཟླ་བ། །
ཐོས་བསམ་གྱི་ནམ་མཁར། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་ཤར་ཡང་། །
སྙོམ་[156] ལས་[157] ཀྱི་གཟའ་ཡིས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ཟིན་**ཡ**། །

བདེན་ཚིག་གི་མེ་ལྕེ། །
ཆོས་གཏམ་གྱི་ནགས་ལ། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་འབར་ཡང་། །
རྫུན་ཚིག་གི་ཆར་བས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བསད་**ཡ**། །[158]

Although the moon of diligence
Appeared again and again
In the sky of hearing and considering,
[It] was helplessly consumed
By the planet of indolence. **Hey!**

Although the flame of truthful words
Burned again and again
In the forest of religious discourse,
[It] was helplessly extinguished
By the rain of untruthful speech. **Hey!**

In all its appearances in the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, the interjection *ya* is used at the end of a line, after a finite verb, which may be in any tense of the indicative, or in the imperative.[159] *Ya* is also found frequently in the Ge sar epic, where it often ends lines and sometimes ends stanzas. (Helffer does not translate it.)

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156 *snyom* BCD; *snyoms* A. a
157 *las* ACD; *pas* B.
158 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 71/ 64.
159 The interjection *ya* occurs in Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, Mgur IV-3 (13x), IV-7 (a *mgur* related to IV-3, 22x), IV-8 (in which each line in which it appears begins with *a'u*, 14x), VIII-24 (a *mgur* related to IV-8, also with *a'u*, 1x), VIII-26 (a *mgur* with sounds such as *a li*, 3x) and X-5 (1x).

e go

E go is used in only two of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, though frequently in each, and the fact that the *mgur* are related underlines his restricted use of this interjection. In fact, both *mgur* use the same line in which *e go* appears last. Don grub rgyal lists it as an interrogative word in his section on calling sounds. It is not defined in either the *TTC* or in *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs*. Since Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses *e go* in the sense of intuitive understanding, I have chosen to translate it as "Get it?" Here is an excerpt from Mgur IV-8, which demonstrates how Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses *e go*:

འོ་འོ་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉིང་ཁུ་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ཚུལ་བཞིན་ཉམས་སུ་ལོངས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་**ཨེ་གོ** །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་དངོས་གྲུབ་འབྱུང་གནས་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་བསམ་དང་སྦྱོར་བས་སྟེན་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་**ཨེ་གོ** །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་དལ་འབྱོར་ཚང་བའི་མི་ལུས། །
ཨའུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་རྙེད་པར་དཀའ་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་[160] སྙིང་པོ་ལོངས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་**ཨེ་གོ** །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །[161]

'O 'o! The Gradual Stages of Enlightenment
A'u! is the essence of religion. Hey!
Kho re! Practice in accordance with [its] manner!

[160] *kyi* CD; *kyis* AB.
[161] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 77-78/ 69-70.

He he! The mind is happy and glorious, **get it?**
Ya yi ya yi!

’O ’o! The holy glorious lama
A’u! is the origin of the spiritual powers. Hey!
Kho re! Attend to [him] in mind and deed!
He he! The mind is happy and glorious, **get it?**
Ya yi ya yi!

’O ’o! The human body which is replete with the eighteen conditions
A’u! is very hard to obtain. Hey!
Kho re! Receive the essence of religion.
He he! The mind is happy and glorious, **get it?**
Ya yi ya yi!

The interjections at the beginning of the lines will be explained below.

kye

The following three interjections, *kye*, *kye kye*, and *kye ma*, are listed by Don grub rgyal as calling sounds in his section, *Mgur rang gi rgyan*. The interjection *kye* is used sparsely in the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, and judging from the contexts, it is often used in the sense of a warning, or to express disapproval.[162] The following is an example of such a usage from Mgur II-5:

ཀྱེ་དགེ་ལ་བརྩོན་པར་མི་བྱེད་ན། །
གནས་དབེན་པར་བསྡད་ཀྱང་དོན་འགོ་ཆུང་། །[163]

[162] The *TTC* defines *kye* as *rang las mtho ba zhig la ’bod pa’i sgra*, with the example “*kye rgyal po chen po*.” Stein similarly mentions the use of the interjection *kye* in the Gesar epic: “*kye/ a la li la mo la li*; *a ya ya*, cet homme merveilleux.” See *Recherches sur l’épopée et le barde au Tibet*, 494. But that is not the sense here. Other examples of *kye* used with the sense that I have proposed can be found in Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, IV-11, p. 82; V-16b, p. 114; and II-5, p. 30.

[163] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 29/ 26.

Alas! If [you] don't make effort towards virtue,
Even if [you] stayed in a hermitage, the source of benefit would be small.

In Mgur V-9, there is an example of *kye* in the closing dedication. Here it occurs at the end of the line, with the same sense as in the example above:

ཁྱེད་གྲོགས་པོ་གཞན་ལ་མིན་ནོ་ཀྱེ། །
མདོར་བསྡུས་ན་རང་དོན་རང་གིས་གྱིས། །[164]

You are not a friend to others. **Alas!**
In short, you yourself must act for the benefit of me!

kye kye

The interjection *kye kye* is used by Skal ldan rgya mtsho in the familiar opening passage of the bees addressing him in Mgur cycle IV-1. The *TTC* translates *kye kye* as *nan tan gyis 'bod pa'i tshig*. Here the bees are surely calling out to him with exertion:

ཀྱེ་ཀྱེ་ཉོན་ཅིག་མང་ཐོས་ཤིང་དྲུང་པ[165]། །
ཚེ་རབས་སྔོན་ནས་ཀུ་རེ་རྩེད་མོ་སོགས། །
བག་མེད་བྱ་བས་ཉིན་མཚན་འདས་པ་ལས། །
ཐོག་མེད་དུས་ནས་ད་བར་སྲིད་འདིར་འཁྱམས། །[166]

Hey, hey, listen, scholar under the tree!
Because of making careless jokes, games, and so on in past lives,
From beginningless time up until now, passing nights and days,
[You] have wandered about in this existence.

Saying *kye kye*, the bees want to attract Skal ldan rgya mtsho's attention to the fact that his life is full of meaningless acts, and that he must listen to their advice, since they know so much more than he does! *Kye kye* is a call for attention and for action.

[164] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 102/ 91.
[165] *pa* CD; *ba* AB.
[166] Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 64/ 58.

kye ma

The *TTC* translates *kye ma* as *smad pa dang/ smon pa/ zhum pa/ ngo mtshar ba/ mya ngag/ nges pa sogs kyi don la ’jug pa’i ’bod tshig cig*. In the following example from Mgur XIII-12, it is used in the sense of *zhum pa*, fear and dismay; as well as *mya ngag*, misery:

ཀྱེ་མ་འཁོར་བ་ལ་ནི་བདེ་བ་མེད། །
མེ་ཡི་འོབས་ལྟར་ལྟོས་ཤིག་ལི་མོའི་བུ། །[167]

Alas! In samsara there is no happiness.
Watch it like a fiery pit, son of Li mo.

’o ’o
a’u
kho re
he he

There are two *mgur* among Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s that regularly introduce the respective lines of their stanzas with the same sequence of sounds. Mgur VIII-24 is comprised of four-line stanzas, that begin with *’o ’o*, *a’u*, *kho re* and *he he* respectively.[168] Mgur IV-8 is comprised of five-line stanzas, each line of which begins with the same sounds as in Mgur VIII-24, respectively, followed by a fifth line of pure sound, *ya yi ya yi*. All these interjections with the exception of *he he* are used exclusively in these two *mgur*. Mgur IV-8 is translated in full in the appendix, and I will use it to provide examples of the same sequence of sounds introducing lines:

འོ་འོ་ཕ་རྒོད་བློ་བཟང་གྲགས་པ། །
ཨའུ་གདན་གྱི་སྐྱབས་གནས་ཡིན་ལ། །
ཁོ་རེ་སྙིང་ནས་གུས་པས་འདུད་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

[167] Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 346/ 307.
[168] Mgur VIII-24 is found in Skal ldan, *Mgur ’bum*, 192-93.

འོ་འོ་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉིང་ཁུ་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཀོ་རེ་ཚུལ་བཞིན་ཉམས་སུ་ལོངས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་དངོས་གྲུབ་འབྱུང་གནས་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཀོ་རེ་བསམ་དང་སྦྱོར་བས་བསྟེན་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །
etc.[169]

Oh yeah! Prudent father Blo bzang grags pa
Hey you! is a place of perpetual refuge! Hey!
Hey! Bow [to him] with respect from the heart!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The *Gradual Stages of Enlightenment*
Hey you! is the essence of religion. Hey!
Hey! Practice in accordance with [its] manner!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The holy glorious lama
Hey you! is the origin of spiritual powers. Hey!
Hey! Attend to [him] in mind and deed!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!
etc.

169 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 77-78/ 69-70.

'o 'o

The expression *'o 'o* is translated by Jäschke as "Oh yes!—as a reply." It does not appear in the *TTC*. Above, I have translated it as the colloquial, "Oh yeah!" It begins the first line of each of the five-line stanzas in the *mgur*, and appears fourteen times.

a'u

A'u, as it is, is not translated in the *TTC*. It is another way, often used in Amdo, of attracting a person's attention if one doesn't know his name.[170] Hence, I have translated it as "Hey!" or "Hey you!" It begins the second line of each of the stanzas, which completes the thought of the first line, whether with good news or with bad news, throughout the *mgur*. Structurally, it comes amidst the first sentence of each stanza, after the subject that occurs in the first line. Notice that every line that begins with *a'u* ends with *ya*, the interjection discussed above.

kho re

The *TTC* defines *kho re* as *skyes pa la 'bod pa'i sgra*, "a sound for calling someone." Here, where it begins the third line of each stanza, it calls the listener's attention to the imperative: "Hey you, bow....," "Hey you, practice....," "Hey you, rely....."

he he

The *TTC* gives the expression *he he* two translations: *dga' ba'i gad mo*, "a laughter of joy," and *'jig skrag bskul ba'i gad mo*, "a laughter which induces fear." Examples of both are found in the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. In the *mgur* quoted above, I have translated *he he* in the sense of joyous laughter, and have given it the English rendering,

[170] This identification was made through personal communication with the Bkra shis 'khyil monk, Dpal 'byor.

"ha ha." It comes at the beginning of the fourth line of each stanza, which is repeated in full each time throughout the *mgur*.

Before moving on to the fourth sound of this series to be discussed, I wish to provide an example of *he he* in the sense of a laughter which induces fear, which is found once in Mgur VIII-26, of which I quote the first nine lines:

གཉུག་མ་འོད་གསལ་གཤིས་ལ། །
བཟང་ངན་སྐྱོས་པ་མེད་དོ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི། །

སྟོང་ཉིད་རིགས་པས་དཔྱད་ན། །
བདག་འཛིན་ཁོ་ཡང་**ཧེ་ཧེ**། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[171]། །

བདེན་འཛིན་སྟོང་པས་བཀག་ན། །
སུ་འཁོར་གང་འཁོར་ཧ་ཧ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[172]། །
etc.[173]

As for the natural disposition of primordial, clear light
There is no generation of good and bad.
A li lo mo a li.

If [one] examines emptiness through reasoning,
Clinging to self, itself also—**heeee heeee!**
A li lo mo a li.

If clinging to truth is refuted through emptiness,
Who goes around? What goes around? Ha ha!
A li lo mo a li.
etc.

Here I have translated the Tibetan *he he* as "heeee heeee," in order to try to give a sense of a scolding type of laughter that would cause shudders in the listener.

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171 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
172 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
173 Skal ldan, *Mgur 'bum*, 194/ 171.

ya yi ya yi

The expression *ya yi ya yi* does not appear in the *TTC* or in *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs*. It rounds off each of the five-line stanzas of Mgur IV-8. Since it follows a line introduced by a sound of joyous laughter, *ya yi ya yi* seems also to be a sound of rejoicing. In English translation, I have left it as it is.

Note the similarity of the following to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's poem. I have formatted in bold the parts that correspond exactly to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Mgur IV-8:

> **འོ་འོ་**སྤྲོད་པའི་ནད་བརྒྱ་སེལ་བའི། །
> **ཨའུ་**སྨན་མཆོག་འདི་ཉིད་**ཡིན་ཡ**། །
> **ཁོ་རེ་**རྒྱང་གླུའི་ཚུལ་དུ་འཐེན་**དང་**། །
> **ཧེ་ཧེ་སློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ** །
> **ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི**། །

Yet the *mgur* is by Bya btang Byams pa chos dar,[174] the personal name of Zhabs dkar ba Tshogs drug rang grol. Zhabs dkar obviously also associated this set of sounds with laughter, because he wrote "The Laughter of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas," "The Laughter of Mañjuśrī and Saraswatī," "The Laughter of Milarepa and his Spiritual Sons" and "The Laughter of Brahmā" using most of these interjections in the same way. And Zhabs dkar attributes his influence in these songs to Skal ldan rgya mtsho's "playful....tongue-twisting" style.[175]

CONCLUSION

In summary, I have discussed the interjections *a me, ha ha, e ma ho, a la la, a li, a li lo mo a li, a a a li lo mo, ya, e go, kye, kye kye, kye ma, 'o 'o, a'u, kho re, he he,* and *ya yi ya yi* within the context of selected excerpts from the *mgur* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho and the

[174] See Don grub rgyal, *Bod kyi mgur glu*, 531-32.
[175] Ricard, trans., *The Life of Shabkar: The Autobiography of a Tibetan Yogin*, 170-74.

application of any translations in dictionaries, chiefly the *TTC*, towards a possible decipherment of his usage of them.

I have also discussed the structural functions of the interjections within the excerpts. The vast majority of interjections come at the beginning of a line. A couple of them (*kye*, *ha ha* and *a li*) are used at both the beginnings and ends of lines. Several of the interjections fill whole lines themselves. The majority of interjections come at the beginning of a sentence. *A li* and *kye* come both at the beginning and end of a sentence. *Ha ha* sometimes interrupts a sentence after a relative clause. *A la la,* which often introduces a sentence, can also be found to come between relative and main clauses. Interjections that fill whole lines come after the sentence, and finish off the stanza.

The four interjections that Skal ldan rgya mtsho used as a set come at the beginning of the lines, and are used exclusively in those two *mgur*, with one exception of *he he* appearing once elsewhere. *'O 'o, kho re* and *he he* all introduce sentences. *A'u* frequently comes in the middle of sentences. *'O 'o, a'u, kho re* and *he he* form a special, mutually independent group of interjections, the study of which will surely lead to further revelations about a fascinating world.

In the preceding two chapters I have presented a wide variety of poetic figures belonging to two categories: the formal tradition associated with the *Kāvyādarśa* and its application in Tibetan classical verse coming out of the monasteries, and what seem to be indigenous Tibetan traditions associated with verse found in Dunhuang manuscripts, Mi la ras pa's songs, the Ge sar epic, Tibetan folk songs and expressions in daily life. As we saw in his choices of stanza patterns and metrics, Skal ldan rgya mtsho has exhibited skill in the styles of both categories, reflecting his multiple areas of expertise and interest. But again, my examples of the indigenous poetic figures in his *mgur* far outweigh the classical ones. With the completion of this overview of what we know about Skal ldan rgya mtsho's style from the printed page, I will now turn to a coda on how his songs are sung today.

CODA

THE TRADITION OF SINGING SKAL LDAN RGYA MTSHO'S *MGUR* TODAY

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* continue to play an active role in peoples' lives in the Reb gong region of Amdo. Considered the first of their most important reincarnation lineage, he remains one of the most revered of all lamas in the history of Reb gong. Virtually every nomad and farmer has a copy of his *Mgur 'bum* in his house or tent and respects it as a sacred object, much as a religious statue or *thang ka* painting, whether he has the reading skill to understand all the poems or not. Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Collected Writings*, including the *Mgur 'bum*, play a part in the curriculum of Rong bo monastery, Rong bo Bkra shis 'khyil monastery, and other Dge lugs pa monasteries influenced by him in Amdo. The monk-scholars I have met in such monasteries consider reading the *Mgur 'bum* sufficient for receiving instruction and inspiration from his songs.

But the surprising thing is that, besides the simple reverence to the text as a religious object and the monk-scholars' custom of reading and studying Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, there exists another tradition of specially designated monks and lay soloists who actually sing these *mgur* regularly in specific ritual contexts. This is very unusual, in spite of the fact that *mgur* were intended to be sung, since the tradition of the singing of most other siddhas' *mgur* has died out.

One of the few exceptions is Mi la ras pa's *mgur*, which are still sung in a few spots today. However, there is no standardization of performance style. Several plausible recordings produced by S. Beyer are sung by a 'Brug pa monk or monks; and a Khams pa painter and sculptor, singing simple pentatonic melodies with only short melismas.[1] Another pair of songs whose style shows a close relationship to folk music were recorded by J. Levy in Bhutan and

[1] *Tibetan Mystic Song*, Lyrichord record LLST 7290, contains six *mgur* by Mi la ras pa, as well as several by Pad ma dkar po, Rgod tshang pa, disciples of Sgam po pa and Lo ras pa. *Songs of Gods and Demons*: *Ritual and Theatrical Music of Tibet,* Lyrichord record LLST 7291, also produced by Stephan Beyer, contains one song by Mi la ras pa.

are sung by *manipa*s (wandering ascetics) in an elaborated, melismatic way.[2] While the recordings of Beyer and Levy each show a faithful relationship to some form of folk music, their respective forms of folk music are very different. Other recordings, not concerned with authenticity, indicate that Tibetans feel they can perform Mi la ras pa's songs in just about any way that strikes their fancy. Such recordings range from Bla brang Bkra shis 'khyil monks' performance in an animated, classical style accompanied by instruments in a swinging rhythm,[3] to the performances by other monks or nuns using lots of sustained notes in extremely slow tempos.[4] The latter recordings show no discernable influence from folk songs, and hence no relationship to the way Mi la ras pa himself may have sung his *mgur*.

By contrast, not only is there a general standardization of how Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs are to be performed today,[5] but the way they are sung shows a strong relationship to folk songs. In particular, major aspects of their form are like those of folk songs sung in Eastern Tibet, and hence may well resemble how Skal ldan rgya mtsho sang his songs in the seventeenth century. Because of that, and because of the lively tradition that still encompasses them, an

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[2] *Temple Rituals and Public Ceremonies*, in *Tibetan Buddhist Rites from the Monasteries of Bhutan*, vol. 3, Lyrichord compact disc LYRCD 9001, contains two *mgur* by Mi la ras pa on bands 10 and 14. The song on band 10 is sung by Rdo rje rin chen, a wandering ascetic from Pabisa in the Thimphu district; the song on band 14 is sung by Nado, a wandering ascetic from Simphu, in the Tongsa Valley.

Hear also Drukpa, Jigme, *Endless Songs from Bhutan*, Grappa Musikforlag HCD 7143, track 5. Jigme Drukpa sings a Mi la ras pa song while accompanying himself on the *sgra snyan* (a Tibetan lute-like instrument). His gentle style of singing melismas over an absolutely steady pulse, accentuated by striking his strings, is characteristic of much of Bhutanese folk music.

[3] *Monastère tibétain de Labrang*, Ocora/ Radio France compact disc C 560101, band 15 (sung by monks of Bla brang Bkra shis 'khyil monastery).

[4] Hear, for example, *Musique sacrée tibétaine*, Ellébore compact disc 55945.2 (sung by 'Brug pa monks in unison), band 4; and *The Songs of Milarepa: Tibetan Music from the Mahayana Buddhist Nunnery*, Lyrichord record LLST 7285 (sung by nuns).

[5] That is, the lay singers and young monks sing a melody in a similar way. The more experienced monks take the further step of singing several cycles also in that way, and then speeding up by blending into fragments of the melody a chanting style that improvises on that melody's cells. My accompanying CD illustrates these points. Hear, for example, tracks 4 and 5 (which illustrate two lay performances of the same melody); tracks 7, 8, and 11 (performances by a lay soloist, a young monk and an experienced monk of a given melody); and tracks 9 and 10 (performances of a young and an experienced monk of yet another melody).

investigation into the performance of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* has unique importance for the study of the genre itself. In this coda, I will focus on this very alive ritual tradition of singing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* from the point of view of both its musical and ritual contexts.

The Musical Context

The general form in which Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* are sung today is antiphonal, with a soloist singing several lines from the *mgur* and with a chorus singing *Oṃ mā ṇi padme* [*hūṃ*][6] after him. The chorus is often quite large, and can number from one hundred and fifty to seven hundred villagers. The soloist and chorus go back and forth singing their parts, until an entire *mgur* is completed. The process is slow, and it may take thirty minutes for a song of sixty-four lines to be performed. The soloist has over eighteen highly complex melodies from which to chose one appropriate for his lines for a certain *mgur*. The chorus must then respond to him with a prescribed matching melody of an extremely simplified contour consisting mainly of sustained notes from the same pitch collection as the soloist's. By oral tradition, this style of singing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* antiphonally in a variety of melodies is said to date back to Shes rab bkra shis, a mountain hermit disciple of Skal ldan rgya mtsho at Bkra shis 'khyil.[7]

But since Skal ldan rgya mtsho was sometimes alone in the solitary places where he sang his *mgur*, his original way of singing them could not have necessitated a chorus. Moreover, Skal ldan rgya mtsho sang *mgur* largely to express religious teachings and his experience of them, so he must have sung them in a way that brought out the meaning of the words. Nowadays, the purpose of the singing

[6] This is the mantra of Avalokiteśvara.

[7] Bkra shis 'khyil monk Dpal 'byor, interview by author, Bkra shis 'khyil, notes, late summer, 2000. For Shes rab bkra shis' biography by his disciple Ngag dbang 'phrin las rgya mtsho (1678–1734), see *Rje btsun dam pa shes rab bkra shis pa'i rnam par thar pa lhag bsam sprin gyi sgra dbyangs rna ba'i dga' ston byin rlabs myur 'jug*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999), vol. 4, pp. 334-66. However, the biography does not go into any detail about his involvement with the formation of this musical tradition. A khu Khri rgan tshang, interview by author, Xining, June 10, 2001.

does not seem to be instruction so much as ritual. There are aspects of the present way of singing in which the form even obscures the words.[8] It seems probable that the purpose of singing the songs moved from instruction (by Skal ldan rgya mtsho) to ritual (by later generations). And it is also likely that this shift was accompanied by a parallel movement away from a musical style that was generated by the words and ostensibly more free—reflecting how Skal ldan rgya mtsho may have sung—to a more regimented one in terms of prescribed melodies, stanza lengths, and the ubiquitous necessity of a chorus. Skal ldan rgya mtsho created new words, whereas today the singers read from a fixed text, a woodblock print of the *Mgur 'bum*, while singing.

Although the musical form today shows stylization, interesting aspects of the original way of singing the *mgur* may be shining through its trappings. I propose that certain melodic and rhythmic characteristics of the soloists may provide windows to the past, because they indicate an influence from folk songs. It is on those melodic and rhythmic aspects that I now want to focus.[9]

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[8] One indication that the music of the tradition as it is now known has been superimposed onto the words (rather than being generated by them) is that long melismas sometimes fall on genitive or adverbial particles, or on an adjective that precedes a noun, breaking up the sense of the syntactic units. Extreme awkwardness comes about when singing the melody Gnyis go'u thung ngo, which has a caesura amidst the beats of its first line, calling for the singing to come to a standstill no matter what relation the following syllables have to the preceding ones. Singing Mgur III-7 in this melody renders a full rest after Skal ldan, while the syllables rgya mtsho then begin the next phrase. Moreover, sometimes the melodic patterns form a musical stanza that does not match the textual stanza patterns in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, so lines that are not meant to be grouped together are sung together, such as the last lines of one sentence and the beginning lines of the next, as if they formed a unit. Sometimes the monks even group the last lines of a *mgur* with the first lines of the next, and no one seems to blink an eye.

For another example of the problem of fitting thought to meter, see Albert Bates Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000): 21-22.

[9] It is beyond my scope here to comment on an antecedent for the role of the chorus as it is used today in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs. All recordings of antiphonal Tibetan music available to me show the equal importance of both parts, such as the play songs and work songs in which men and women sing back and forth to one another (though the men usually sing first). For examples of antiphonal Tibetan folk music, hear, for example, *Tibetan Folk and Minstrel Music*, Lyrichord record LLST 7196, tracks 2, 6, 7, and 11; and *Songs and Music of Tibet*, Folkways Records Album No. FE4486, side 1, bands 2-4; and side 2, bands 1, 2, 4, 6-8.

The style of antiphony in the citations above is in contrast to that in the present style of singing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs, which alternates between a dominant

There are at least eighteen melodies from which the soloists can choose.[10] Some *mgur* can be sung in a variety of melodies, while others can be sung in only one melody. I will list names of the melodies below. Because these names belong exclusively to the oral tradition and because in the Amdo dialect one pronunciation can be spelled in many ways, I found no consensus on how to write the names of some of these melodies. My list includes spelling variants that were proposed to me by singers and others in the area:[11]

དུང་དཀར་འབྲུག་གྲགས་ དུང་དཀར་འབྲུག་གྲགས་མ་
ཛོག་ལང་
ལྷ་ས་
ཇོ་སྐོལ་ ཙོ་སྐོལ་ ཙོ་གོའུ་ ཙོ་སྐོའུ་
རྫོང་དཀར་
ཕ་རྐོད་ ཏ་རྐོད་
གཉིས་སྐོལ་ཐུང་བོ་[12] གཉིས་སྐོལ་ཐུང་ངོ་ ཉིས་གོའུ་ཐུང་བོ་ ཉིས་གོའུ་ཐུང་ངོ་
ཉིས་སྐོའུ་ཐུང་བོ་

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soloist (with changing lines) and a subservient chorus (that always responds with the same words).

[10] Popular tradition claims that there are precisely eighteen melodies, but if one counts, there are more. The choice of a melody for a particular *mgur* is based at least partially on the meter of the *mgur* to be sung. For example:

mgur with meter	3 + 2	can only be sung in one melody
	2 + 2 + 2	can be sung in many melodies
	2 + 2 + 3	"
	2 + 3 + 2	"
	2 + 2 + 2 + 3	can only be sung in a few melodies

Interview with the resident lay *mgur* singer of Hor nag, Rin chen byams, Aug. 30, 2000.

[11] These spellings were suggested by one of the most experienced soloists from Rong bo dgon monastery, the lay resident singer of Hor nag, and several monks of Bkra shis 'khyil. Rong bo dgon monastery, a small monastery about a three hours walk west of Bkra shis 'khyil, or about a seven hours walk west of Reb gong, is to be distinguished from Rong bo dgon chen, the large monastery in Reb gong. Rong bo dgon monk Dge 'dun 'od zer, interviews by author, notes, Hor nag ri gong ma, June 18 and 21, 2001; Dpal 'byor, interview by author, notes, Bkra shis 'khyil, Sept. 4, 2000; Byams pa rgya mtsho, interview by author, notes, Bkra shis 'khyil, Aug. 30, 2000; and Rin chen byams, interview by author, notes, A bog and Stong ces, June 27, 2001.

[12] This and the subsequent one (*gnyis skol ring bo*) are instead names of melody groups, both of which contain a number of melodies themselves.

གཉིས་སྐོལ་རིང་བོ་ ཉིས་གོའུ་རིང་ངོ་ གཉིས་སྐོལ་རིང་ངོ་ ཉིས་སྐོའུ་རིང་བོ་
མ་ཧི་བཞི་སྐོལ་
བཞི་སྐོལ་རིང་ངོ་ བཞི་གོའུ་རིང་ངོ་
བཞི་སྐོལ་ཐུང་ངོ་ བཞི་གོའི་ཐུང་ངོ་
གཅིག་སྐོལ་ གཅིག་གོའུ་
རྒྱང་འབོད་
ཁེར་སྐོལ་ཐུང་ངོ་
ལྷེ་སྐོལ་
དགེ་བ་ཚོགས་བྱང་
ཨ་ཁུ་ཚོས་ཁུར་[13]

Again, it is most probable that Skal ldan rgya mtsho did not limit himself to a set of melodies from which to choose, though he may have had favorites. Even from among this fixed group today, variations are seen when I compare how singers of different villages perform certain melodies and which ones they tend to emphasize. It is true that each village claims to have the "authentic version," each is slightly different from the others[14] and there is no way to know how the songs were originally sung. However, a few generalizations may give us indications of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's original style.

The melodies above and how they are performed share certain characteristics. They involve a pitch collection of between four and seven notes, with a range not much more than an octave and a half and often quite less. Movement within the phrases is characterized by sustained notes, some of which are decorated with quick melismas in free rhythms.[15] The lengths of the sustained notes are sometimes in stark contrast to the ornamental decorations. The lines frequently fall into pairs. And they are sung with no instrumental accompaniment. I have placed examples on my accompanying CD.

There is no doubt that the closest match in all of Tibetan music to the melodies of the soloists who sing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* today are folk songs of Eastern Tibet, since many of them are sung

[13] This last melody is sung only in Bod mo. Dpal 'byor, interview by author, notes, Bkra shis 'khyil, Sept. 4, 2000.
[14] A khu Khri rgan tshang, interview by author, Xining, June 10, 2001.
[15] These ornaments may involve as many as 22 notes.

by soloists with no instrumental accompaniment, have long sustained notes, many of which are decorated by complex melismatic ornaments, and have lines that are also often grouped into pairs.[16] In particular, I have not heard any nomad songs from eastern Tibet that do not have these properties, unless they are dance songs.[17] Some farmers' songs from these regions also share them.[18] The following table will illustrate these points:

[16] Following is a list of recordings of songs that fit this description. Note that all of these songs are from Amdo, Khams, eastern Tibet or other nomad regions. Most of them are nomad songs, but several of them are farmers' songs. Hear *Tibetan Folk Songs from Lhasa and Amdo*, Lyrichord record LLST 7286, side B, track 5 (from Amdo) and tracks 8-10 (from Khams); *Musique et théâtre populaires tibetains*, Ocora record OCR 62, side A, track 4 (from eastern Tibet); *Tibetan Folk and Minstrel Music*, side A, tracks 1-4, 7, 10, 13 (from Khams; the last three are occupation songs for sowing seed, threshing wheat and carrying logs or other loads up the hill); *Tibetan Folk Music: Traditional Songs and Instrumental Music from the Roof of the World*, Saydisc compact disc SDL 427, tracks 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, and 25 (all from areas from which nomad songs come: Nagchu, Sertal and Khams); *Dhama Suna*, Detour compact disc 0630-19064-2, track 8 (a nomad song from Khams sung by a performer belonging to the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts).

Bhutanese folk music is really in a separate category, since it very frequently uses complex melismatic passages to decorate an absolutely steady beat, whether accompanied by an instrument and not. Hear, for example, *Temple Rituals and Public Ceremonies*, in *Tibetan Buddhist Rites from the Monasteries of Bhutan*, vol. 4, Lyrichord compact disc LYRCD 9001, tracks 5-9, 18 and 19 (folk songs from Bhutan); and Jigme Drukpa, *Endless Songs from Bhutan*.

[17] I have adopted the classifications of songs I use in this discussion—nomad songs, farmers' songs, mountain songs, dance songs, work and occupational songs and songs from certain places—from the annotations of recordings cited in this coda.

[18] But most other farmers' songs from Eastern Tibet are for dance, have a steady pulse, and/or have instrumental accompaniment. Hear *Tibetan Folk Songs from Lhasa and Amdo*, side B, tracks 1-4 (dance music from Amdo); and *Tibetan Folk Music*, tracks 10 and 18 ("Truly in Love," from Khams and "The Crops in the Fields are Growing Nicely," from Sertal).

	Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs	nomad or mountain songs; songs from Eastern Tibet, Amdo, Khams (excluding dance songs)	songs from Lhasa, Central Tibet and Gzhis ka rtse; all dance songs, including from Amdo and Khams[19]
solo voice or homophonic, a cappella	yes	yes	no[20]
sustained notes sometimes decorated with freestyle ornaments	yes	yes	no

The style of the soloists singing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs is related to how nomad, mountain and Eastern Tibetan songs (except dance songs) are sung in certain fundamental ways, summarized above. Moreover, the styles of these two groups contrast with the styles from Lhasa, Central Tibet, and Gzhis ka rtse, and the styles of dance songs in general, in the same fundamental ways.

There is no way to determine the ages of the melodies that are currently sung, and it is probable that they themselves are substitutions for earlier tunes, Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* having been reset to new tunes as they became popular locally over the centuries. We cannot know precisely what melodies Skal ldan rgya mtsho sang, but it is likely that he employed melodies similar to those of the

[19] Hear, for example, *Tibetan Folk Music: Traditional Songs and Instrumental Music from the Roof of the World*, tracks 1, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, and 26 (from Lhasa, Central Tibet, Gzhis ka rtse, and a dance song from Khams); *Monastère tibétain de Labrang*, tracks 12-18 (theater music); *Musique et théâtre populaires Tibetains*, tracks 1, 2b, 3, 6-8 (dance songs; song from Central Tibet) and *Songs and Music of Tibet*, side A, bands 1-2 (dance songs).

[20] The exceptions are work and occupational songs that have other similarities to music from Central Tibet and Gzhis ka rtse but are of course by nature unaccompanied. Hear, for example, *Tibetan Folk and Minstrel Music*, tracks 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 14 (agricultural songs from Sa skya and Rgyal rtse).
Imitation nomad songs in operas and the epic are beyond the scope of this coda.

popular folk songs of his day, or improvised in their style.[21] He would have been familiar with that style, and would have even heard it quite often at his hermitages. On the far eastern side of the Tibetan plateau, valleys cut into the highlands and steep mountains are quite close to one another. There is an echoing effect, and frequently I heard nomads singing out very clearly, although I could only see a black dot—a yak—very far below. Skal ldan rgya mtsho may well have used the melodies of the nomad songs of his area to sing his own *mgur*, in the long tradition that went back to the *caryāgīti* in India and its development in Tibet in the *mgur* attributed to Mar pa and Mi la ras pa. In my chapter on metrics I pointed out that the meters he used most often are meters used in folk music, as we know it. His style would have appealed to the mountain hermits that he was teaching and the familiarity of his melodies would have complemented his instructions, the tunes already having been part of their daily lives.[22]

[21] Contrafacta, or the setting of texts to pre-existent melodies, is very common in other ritual contexts as well. Examples are frequent from other cultures and times. In the West, contrafacta dates back to the fifteenth century, where, after 1450, it usually occurred as in the process above, namely a sacred text substituted a secular one. Contrafacta blended something new (a text) with something older (a melody), in order to give a sense of familiarity to the message imparted. See *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d. ed, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001). For examples of contrafacta in sacred Syrian Jewish hymns, see Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[22] While the folk songs of Eastern Tibet are the major influence upon how soloists sing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs today, it is important to recognize that there are differences between the styles too. The soloists who sing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs sing them in a much tamer, more reserved way than the singers on most of the recordings I have heard of eastern Tibetan folk music, since the melodies used to sing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs have fewer wide leaps, a narrower range, and gentle (irregular) beats. Something close to them can be heard in *Temple Rituals and Public Ceremonies*, in *Tibetan Buddhist Rites from the Monasteries of Bhutan*, vol. 4, tracks 6, 7 and 19, since the folk songs recorded on these tracks have less wild leaps than those on the other recordings, and since they employ gentle beats.

I would like to remind the reader that throughout this discussion, I am comparing only the style of the soloists singing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs to the style of folk songs. However, absent from all the recordings cited above is a chorus singing *mantra*s in intermittent lines. This is another big difference between how the folk songs on the recordings are sung and how Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs are sung today.

The Ritual Contexts

The soloists are specially designated, and the roles they play determine whether they should be lay people or monks. I shall describe the two systems separately, starting with the lay singers. This tradition is alive in each of the villages on the Tibetan plateau to the west of the Reb gong valley some five hours' walking distance from one to another: Khyung bo, Stong ces, Hor nag, A bog, Bod mo, Sngags sa and Mgron lung.[23] Each of these villages has a special house for singing the *mgur*, a *ma ni khang*. Several that I visited were quite elaborate, with statues and religious paintings decorating their interiors, and doubled as the central places of worship in their respective villages. One of these, the *ma ni khang* in A bog, stood out unmistakably as the most affluent and elaborate structure in the village, with its exquisitely carved wood facade and brick walls.

Each of the seven aforementioned villages has its own resident lay singer who has the sole responsibility for performing whatever rituals are required in his village. The occasions upon which *mgur* should be sung are well defined. When someone dies, the singer and a large chorus of villagers go to the deceased person's courtyard and sing some of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*. If there is a lack of rain, the singer and a number of villagers sometimes go to a particular nearby mountain, where they may stay and sing for four or five days at a time. The singer and a small chorus also will sing on the

[23] Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* are sung in various places in the Rong bo Valley as well, but apparently the tradition has been adulterated there and the performances are considered to be poor. Dpal 'byor, interview by author, notes, Bkra shis 'khyil, late summer, 2000.

There are various other traditions of singing *mgur* on the Tibetan plateau to the west of the Reb gong valley as well. Rong bo dgon monks sing Mi la ras pa's *mgur* in the village of Reb sa every year. Mi la ras pa's songs have traditionally been sung in the village of Brag dkar as well, in a style that did not come out of Rong bo dgon but rather from Sgo dmar in the Rong bo valley. But Brag dkar's text of Mi la ras pa's songs was lost in 1958 with the destruction of the temple, and since the singers have been unwilling to sing from a modern edition, they are now awaiting the acquisition of a woodblock print in order to resume their tradition.

Zhabs dkar's *mgur* are still read to the east of the Reb gong valley when someone dies, in place of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. See Ricard, trans., *The Life of Shabkar*, xiii. They are also sung at times in the Rong bo Valley when someone dies, such as in Mkhar rtse rdzong. But it seems that the tradition is not very active since the present Zhabs dkar ba was not aware that they are sung. M. Ricard and Zhabs dkar ba (the fourth), interview by author, journal, Reb gong, Aug. 16, 2001; Dge 'dun chos 'phel, interview by author, notes, Bkra shis 'khyil, Sept. 4, 2002.

occasion of a person's old age, to promote a longer life. Finally, for some days in the winter before planting the crops, they sing in the *ma ni khang*; and for some days in the summer before the harvest, they sing in the fields.[24]

The monks' tradition of singing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* centers around the summer solstice festival,[25] which goes on for about fifteen straight days on mountains adjacent to all but one of the villages listed above. Only monks from a particular monastery, Rong bo dgon,[26] are allowed to sing in this festival. In the case of this festival, the chorus is huge, made up of all the villagers present, numbering from one hundred and fifty up to as high as seven hundred. A huge tent called a *sbra gur* (felt tent) is set up in each place to accommodate the ritual. The monk-singers sit in front of an altar and their abbot's throne, against a backdrop of *thang ka* paintings of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, Chos pa Rin po che, and other high lamas on the back of the tent. In a semicircle around the monks sit the lay male villagers, and behind them are the lay women. One monk will sing his solo lines from the *Mgur 'bum* for about an hour, with all the villagers singing the intermittent choral parts. Then there will be a break. The villagers go outside and enjoy tea, and the scene is charming beyond words with the views of mountain ranges and valleys and the traditional clothing of the people. Everyone seems to highly enjoy the occasion.

[24] Dpal 'byor and Byams pa rgya mtsho, interviews by author, notes, Bkra shis 'khyil, late summer, 2000. Rin chen byams, interview by author, notes, Reb gong, July 29, 2002.

[25] Why, it could be asked, does it occur over the time of the summer solstice when all or most of the lay rituals take place at times of difficulty? According to A khu Khri rgan tshang, the festival originally took place in April, around the time of the birth of Śākyamuni, but was moved to June so that the weather would be warmer and the time would not conflict with planting. He says that the main purpose of the fifteen day monastic festival is merely to keep the tradition alive. A khu Khri rgan tshang, interview by author, Xining, June 10, 2001.

[26] All the monks there are trained to sing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, from the smallest on up. Private interview, Rong bo dgon monk Blo bzang, interview by author, notes, Hor nag ri gong ma, late June, 2001. The lay singers are also either previous Rong bo dgon monks or have been taught by them. So the entire tradition of singing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* comes out of Rong bo dgon. Dge 'dun chos 'phel, interview by author, notes, Bkra shis 'khyil, Sept. 4, 2002.

Skal ldan rgya mtsho's Lineage Today

The present incarnation of Skal ldan rgya mtsho is twenty-five. Being the eighth incarnation, he is the immediate successor of the extremely popular seventh Skal ldan rgya mtsho, Blo bzang bstan 'dzin 'jigs med 'phrin las (1916–1978), whose tragic death in jail after thirty years of confinement broke the hearts of the people of Reb gong. Because of this, thousands of people flock to the eighth incarnation's teachings in the valleys surrounding Reb gong where he is considered the highest lama, as well as to his teachings in the nomad areas. One empowerment of Avalokiteśvara given in the small monastery of Xiawutong at Sangs rgyas gshongs in Reb gong in September of 2000 attracted a crowd whose size was estimated at upwards of four thousand people. Since the assembly hall at Xiawutong could only accommodate two hundred, monks sat inside and the overflow of lay people stood outside in the mud during periods of rain for two days.

The reincarnation line of Skal ldan rgya mtsho is known and revered throughout Amdo and Skal ldan rgya mtsho (the first) remains one of the highest lamas in the history of Reb gong. One of the most important shrines to him is the house where he lived at Bkra shis 'khyil.[27] It is not unusual for pilgrims to walk more than a month to pay homage in the shrine rooms there to Skal ldan rgya mtsho and Chos pa Rin po che. Once a year, large *thang ka*s of the two are revealed to the many hundreds of villagers and nomads who flock to see them.[28]

Statues and *thang ka*s of Skal ldan rgya mtsho usually depict him with his right hand to his ear, like Mi la ras pa, indicating that he is singing *mgur*. His left hand holds a volume of his *Collected Writings*.[29] On his head is a hat worn by monks of the Dge lugs pa school, like one frequently seen in the iconography of Tsong kha pa. This shows that over three centuries after his death, people still remember Skal ldan rgya mtsho's unique combination of identities: a

[27] The house was burned down during the Cultural Revolution, but was rebuilt in the 1980s.

[28] The *thang ka* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho is said to be a portrait painted during his lifetime.

[29] This differs from iconography of Mi la ras pa, in which his left hand holds a blood-filled skull cup.

Dge lugs pa monk who was both a siddha who sang *mgur* and a scholar.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This is the first commentary in Western literature on the *Mgur 'bum* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho (1607–1677), whose writings are little known in the West. Since my objective has been to use the *Mgur 'bum* to show Skal ldan rgya mtsho's importance both as a distinctive figure in religious history and as an author, I have provided a comprehensive overview of his collection of *mgur*, both from the viewpoint of the autobiographical and biographical material it contains and from the point of view of form.

His *Mgur 'bum* is a collection of two hundred and forty-two songs. The core of the collection goes back to at least 1707. The first woodblock printing of the entire *Mgur 'bum* as we know it today was made in 1756. I have created a critical edition from the four extant versions, one of which is the 1756 woodblock edition, upon which I have based my translations of his songs.

Various scholars have already noted that the genre of *mgur* stands out from most other forms of Tibetan literature for its startlingly and unusually sincere descriptions of inner thoughts, feelings and experiential knowledge. I have found this to be true of the collection of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur*, which contains invaluable autobiographical material and information on his surroundings and his way of life. I have examined four topics about which information is scant or nonexistent in Western languages: Amdo in the seventeenth century, Skal ldan rgya mtsho's own quest to become a hermit, his ecumenical associations and writings, and his tantric practices.

From Skal ldan rgya mtsho's personal accounts, we have learned what life was like under Mongol supremacy, the nature of Tibetan-Mongol relations in Amdo, how he viewed Central Tibet as the source of the teaching, and how he and others spread the Dge lugs pa sect in his homeland. We have also read numerous songs telling us why a Dge lugs pa—who has been immersed in traditional training in the very Central Tibetan monastery that Tsong kha pa himself founded, and who subsequently starts both a school of explanation and a tantric seminary and has hundreds of disciples—would want to

become a hermit, what he is looking for, and his struggle to wean those who were dependent on him so that he could live the life he wanted in solitary places. Accounts of ecumenical tendencies of Dge lugs pas in the early seventeenth century are unknown in Western literature, since seventeenth-century Tibet—with the installing of the fifth Dalai Lama on the throne of Tibet in 1642 after three centuries of civil war between the Dge lugs pas and the Karma pas—is a time in which such associations would have been very delicate. Yet in Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs and writings we have petitions and homages to saints on the opposing side of the war, the Karma pas, and demonstrations of an especially strong relationship with Mi la ras pa. Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs are furthermore a rich source of personal information about his tantric practices, which belong to the lineage of the Dga' ldan Oral Tradition of *Mahāmudrā*, since none of the other lineage holders up to his time wrote *mgur*.

I have also approached the *Mgur 'bum* from the point of view of the wealth of styles it exhibits. This is the first in-depth analysis of any collection of *mgur* in any Western language. I have built upon what Don grub rgyal, Sørensen, Jackson and Eppling have written about religious songs by analyzing the *Mgur 'bum* with respect to dialogue, metrics, stanza patterns and poetic figures, and providing many examples. I have concluded that Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* have been influenced by both classical verse and folksongs. The wide diversity of influences upon his *mgur* reflects his multiple areas of expertise and interest, and dichotomous way of life. The fact that the folk influence far outweighs the classical mirrors his ultimate decision to be a hermit in the mountains rather than to remain an important leader and teacher in a monastery. The variety of meters, stanza patterns and poetic figures in the *Mgur 'bum* indicates Skal ldan rgya mtsho's enthusiasm and ability to write in many styles.

In the very unusual form of *mgur* in conversations with animals—bees, lice, fleas and lice eggs—we have seen Skal ldan rgya mtsho's preoccupation with the themes of residing in solitude, renunciation and practice worked out in the form of conversations with insects. The insects take on a didactic role as his teachers, and he surprisingly portrays himself in an inferior role to them, something I have not yet seen in any *mgur* translated into a Western language.

The many meters Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses show the influence of a wide spectrum of singing styles in Tibet. I have found that on the one hand, Skal ldan rgya mtsho is skilled in one of the traditional meters of classical Tibetan monastic verse (2 + 2 + 2 + 3); on the other, most of his meters are found in folk songs. Because his choice of meters in the *Mgur 'bum* shows a preponderance of folk influence, I believe that he sang his *mgur* in folk melodies, a hypothesis further supported by my analysis of how his songs are sung today.

Because Skal ldan rgya mtsho tends to use some stanza forms in particular ways, and sometimes chooses a particular form for the particular type of statement he wants to make, and because unusual stanza lengths are often accompanied by other unique features of style and/or theme, I have concluded that Skal ldan rgya mtsho is not only experimenting with unusual stanza lengths but also with discrete ways of writing songs. His choices of stanza patterns, like his choices of meters, are influenced mainly by folk songs but also by classical Tibetan verse, reflecting that his dichotomous way of life played a large role in bringing a wide range of influences to his writing.

Some of his poetic figures show the direct influence of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa*, *The Mirror of Poetics*. When ornate poetry (*kāvya*, *snyan ngag*) appears in *mgur*, it is likely to be by song-writers who have had a monastic education. Skal ldan rgya mtsho's thorough education at Dge' ldan sets him apart from many composers of *mgur* related to the Bka' brgyud pa school—such as Mi la ras pa—whom we normally associate with *mgur*, who were not educated in monasteries. I have found that some of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs include poetic figures written in accordance with the *Kāvyādarśa*, of which I have provided examples.

I have also shown examples of figures he uses that were not inspired by Daṇḍin's text: similes, metaphors, parallelisms, continual repetition of the same finite verb at the end of each line of verse, sequences of numbers, and interjections. Again, I have concluded that the indigenous poetic figures in his *mgur* far outweigh the classical ones.

Still today there exists a tradition of monks and lay soloists who sing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* regularly in rituals. This is exceptional: the singing of most other siddhas' *mgur* has died out in spite of the fact that *mgur* were intended to be sung. And while it is

true that Mi la ras pa's *mgur* are still sung, there is no standardization of performance style. By contrast, there is a general standardization of how Skal ldan rgya mtsho's songs are to be performed today. An analysis of the present style of singing them is a valuable source of information, since it may shed light on how Skal ldan rgya mtsho sang his *mgur* in the seventeenth century. The closest match in all Tibetan music to the melodies of the soloists who sing Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* is the folk songs of Eastern Tibet. Therefore, it is likely that Skal ldan rgya mtsho used the tunes of folk songs that were currently popular in his day, or improvised on them, to sing his *mgur*. His disciples, the mountain hermits, would have been familiar with the tunes he was singing and would have felt a sense of rapport with him and his teachings.

The memory of Skal ldan rgya mtsho is still vibrant in the people's hearts throughout Amdo today. His reincarnational lineage remains one of the highest in the area of Reb gong, where the esteemed eighth incarnation presently resides. The first Skal ldan rgya mtsho is usually depicted in paintings and statues with attributes of Avalokiteśvara, indicating that he is thought to be a manifestation of the bodhisattva of compassion. His right hand is at his ear, the classic posture for singing *mgur*. His left hand holds a volume of his writings, and there is a Dge lugs pa hat on his head. This iconography shows that now in the twenty-first century his unusual combination of identities is still held in mind and revered: he is a deity and a monk, a Dge lugs pa scholar who wrote texts and a siddha who sang *mgur*.

Directions of Future Research

It is my hope that this first commentary on Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Mgur 'bum* may lead to further research in a number of areas. Seventeenth-century Eastern Tibet was in a huge state of transition with the migration of the Qoshot Mongol tribe into Amdo, the shifting of power there away from the Tümed to the Qoshot, and its use as a base to effectuate the enthronement of the fifth Dalai Lama by Gushri Khan. For these reasons, and in order to study the interactions of the Tibetans and Mongols in Amdo and the expansion of Dge lugs pa school there, other sources that contain information

about seventeenth-century Amdo should be sought out and translated.

Moreover, Dge lugs pa *mgur* that show folksong influence are rare. There are no collections of *mgur* attributed to lineage holders of the Dga' ldan Oral Tradition of *Mahāmudrā*. The *mgur* of more Dge lugs pa siddhas should be sought out from among their *Collected Writings* and translated. It is still a mystery who could have been Skal ldan rgya mtsho's predecessor in this regard. Furthermore, some of the lama's instructions (*zhal gdams*) from the twelfth century on were *mgur*, and played a role in the transmission of the genre. These *mgur* also need to be studied.

This is the first extended analysis of the styles of any collection of *mgur*. It is my hope that it may serve as a springboard for further studies in *mgur* by providing a foundation for future comparisons. I have introduced a methodology for analyzing a collection of *mgur* that I hope will be of use to future scholars.

More *mgur* need to be recorded. A search for other *mgur* that are still sung today and that have a standardization of performance would be very valuable. Recording folk songs from places in the vicinity and comparing styles could tell something about the original melodies of a set of *mgur*.

The study of *mgur* is a very rich field for autobiographical material as it tells us things in a personal way virtually unique among Tibetan literature. The study of its styles can lead to the discovery of a fascinating blend of the most ornate poetry and folk-influenced lines. *Mgur* are still sung today and can be heard in valleys and on mountains geographically tucked away from the erosion of time. They still remain in the hearts of those who continue the tradition as an integral part of their lives, singing the songs at such crucial times as before the planting, before the harvest, at times of drought and when someone has passed into the *bar do*, or transition state between death and rebirth.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SELECTED *MGUR* TRANSLATED IN FULL

Index

Index According to Topic

III-1, pp. 33-34/ 30-31

དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མའི་ཞབས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ནས། །
རང་གིས་རང་ལ་གཅིག་ལབ་འདི་སྐད་སྨྲ། །

རྒྱུན་དུ་ནང་གི་སེམས་ལ་མ་བལྟས་ན། །
ཆོས་སེམས་འདྲེས་པར་དཀའོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

བླ་མའི་བྱིན་རླབས་སེམས་ལ་མ་ཞུགས་ན། །
ཉམས་རྟོགས་སྐྱེ་བར་དཀའོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

གྲོང་དུ་འདུག་ཡུན་རིང་ན་རང་མཚང་སྟོན། །
འདུག་ས་དབེན་པར་གྱིས་དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ཟས་ནོར་བསོད་ནམས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བར་ཆད་ཡིན། །
འདོད་ཆུང་ཆོག་ཤེས་གྱིས་དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

གྲོགས་ངན་བསྟེན་ན་རང་ཡང་ཇེ་ངན་འགྲོ །
རྟག་ཏུ་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད་དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་གང་ན་བཞུགས་མི་ཤེས། །
མཐོང་མཐོང་ཀུན་ལ་མ་སྨོད་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

གཤིན་རྗེ་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་དྲུང་དུ་གསང་མི་ཐུབ། །
ཆོས་ལ་མངོན་ལྐོག་མ་བྱེད་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

འཆི་བའི་དུས་སུ་ཕན་མཁན་སུ་ཡང་མེད། །
གཉེན་ལ་སྲེད་པ་མ་ཆེ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ལྐོག་ཏུ་གཞན་གྱི་མཚང་ནས་མ་འབྲུ་དང་། །
ལན་པོ་རང་ལ་འཁོར་རོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

III-1, pp. 33-34/ 30-31

Having prostrated [myself] at the feet of glorious lamas,
I myself will give myself this talk.

If [you] have not looked continually into the inner mind,
The integration of religion and the mind is difficult,
mountain hermit!

If the blessing of a lama has not entered [your] mind,
It is hard for experiential knowledge to arise, mountain hermit!

If [you] live in a town for a long time, [you] show your
own faults.
Make [your] dwelling place solitary, mountain hermit!

Food, wealth and merit are hindrances to religion.
Be satisfied with few desires, mountain hermit!

If [you] have relied on bad friends, you yourself will also
get worse!
Always stay alone, mountain hermit!

[You] don't know where bodhisattvas are.
Looking and looking, don't blame everyone, mountain hermit!

[You] can't hide yourself from the Lord of Death.
Don't be hypocritical with respect to religion, mountain hermit!

When [you] die, there is no one at all who [can] help [you].
Don't cherish relatives greatly, mountain hermit!

Don't secretly spy out the faults of others.
[Good and bad] responses will come back to yourself,
mountain hermit!

གཞན་སྐྱོན་མ་རྟོག་རང་གི་སྐྱོན་ལ་རྟོག །
སྐྱོན་[1] མཚང་རང་ལ་ཡོད་དོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ཡི་དམ་ལྷ་ལ་བཟང་ངན་མ་མཆིས་པས། །
རང་ཉིད་གང་མོས་སྙེན་དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ལ་མི་ཟབ་གང་ཡང་མེད། །
དགོས་མེད་ཁ་སྡིག་མ་སོག་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ཕྱག་དང་མཆོད་པས་ལུས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིབ་པ་འདག །
ཉིན་བཞིན་འབད་པར་ཞུས་[2] དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ཁ་ཏོན་བཟླས་པས་ངག་གི་སྒྲིབ་པ་འདག །
དོན་མེད་ལོང་གཏམ་སྤོངས་[3] དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

བསམ་པ་བཟང་ན་ཅི་བྱས་ཆོས་སུ་འགྲོ །
འདི་ལ་ནན་ཏན་གྱིས་དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

སྙིང་རུས་མེད་པའི་མི་ལ་ཉམས་རྟོགས་དཀའ། །
སྒོམ་ལ་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་གྱིས་དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ང་རྒྱལ་ཅན་ལ་ཡོན་ཏན་ཡར་སྐྱེད་མེད། །
ཧ་ཅང་སྐད་འགོ་[4] མ་མཐོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ཕྱི་མར་ཕན་པའི་ཁ་ཏ་བྱེད་མཁན་དཀོན། །
ཀུན་གྱི་གཏམ་ལ་མ་ཉན་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

དབང་གྲོས་མི་ལ་མ་སྙེར་རང་གིས་ཟུངས། །
རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་ལ་གྲོས་དྲིས་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

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[1] *skyon* ACD; *skyen* B (the vowel mark is indistinct).
[2] *zhus* CD; *zhu* AB.
[3] *spongs* CD; *spong* AB.
[4] *'go* ABC; *mgo* D.

Don't examine others' faults; examine your own faults.
Faults are within yourself, mountain hermit!

Since there is no good or bad in tutelary deities,
Rely on any amount of respect for themselves, mountain hermit!

There is no holy religion that is not deep.
Don't accumulate needless sins through speech, mountain hermit!

Through prostrations and offerings [you] will clear away physical obscurations.
I request that you strive daily, mountain hermit!

Through chanting [and] recitations [you] will clear obscurations of speech.
Renounce senseless and unnecessary speech, mountain hermit!

If [your] intention is good, no matter what [you] do, [it] will be harmonious with religion.
Be diligent about this, mountain hermit!

Experiential knowledge is difficult in people without perseverance.
Strive at meditating, mountain hermit!

There is no increase in qualities for the proud.
Do not elevate very sullied speech, mountain hermit!

Later, someone who gives beneficial advice will be rare.
Don't listen to everyone's speech, mountain hermit!

Don't give others powerful advice; take [it] yourself.
Ask advice from the pronouncements of the Victorious One, mountain hermit!

མི་ཡིས་བསྐྱོད་པས་བཟང་བའི་ངེས་པ་མེད། །
བཟང་ངན་ཆོས་དང་སྟུན་[5]དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

རྟག་ཏུ་དམན་ས་ཟུངས་ལ་འཆི་གྲབས་གྱིས[6] །
ནམ་འཆི་ངེས་པ་མེད་དོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

འཇིག་རྟེན་འདི་རུ་གཏན་དུ་མི་སྡོད་ན། །
ཕྱི་མར་ཕན་ཐབས་གྱིས་[7]དང་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

སྒོམ་ཡུན་མ་ཐུང་ཆེ་དང་སྐྱོམས་པར་གྱིས། །
དོན་གྱི་གཙོ་བོ་ཡིན་ནོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

རང་མགོ་རང་གིས་འདོན་ན་བུ་རབ་ཡིན། །
འདོན་ཐབས་དམ་ཆོས་ཡིན་ནོ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །

ཆོ་ལྷའི་ནགས་ཁྲོད་དབེན་གནས་བྲག་དཀར་ནས། །
སྐལ་ལྡན་རས་པས་རང་ལ་གྲོས་བཏབ་པ། །
འདི་ཡིས་རང་དང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་པ་དང་། །
སྒྲུབ་བརྒྱུད་[8]བསྟན་པ་དར་ཞིང་རྒྱས་གྱུར་ཅིག ། ། །

[5] *stun* ABC; *bstun* D.
[6] *gyis* BC; *kyis* AD.
[7] *gyis* BCD; *kyis* A.
[8] *brgyud* B; *rgyud* ACD.

There is no certainty of good through praises people make.
Act in accordance with good and bad *dharma*s, mountain hermit!

Always take the lower place and make preparations for death.
There is no certainty as to when [you] will die, mountain hermit!

If [you] don't live on this earth forever,
Make means of benefiting [yourself] in future lives, mountain hermit!

Meditate not a short time; be in equanimity with life.
[That] is the essence of purpose, mountain hermit!

If you don't need to depend on another, [you] are a good disciple.
The means of raising [yourself] is the holy religion, mountain hermit!

Through this advice given by Skal ldan rgya mtsho to himself
In the solitary place Brag dkar, amidst the forest of the five clans,
May benefit come to himself and others and
May the teaching of the practice lineage spread and become vast.

III-9, pp. 47/ 42-43

རྗེ་དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི། །
ཐུགས་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ནི། །
འབངས་དད་ལྡན་སྣང་ངོར་ཤར་བ་ལས། །
པ་བསྟན་འཛིན་ཞིས་གྲགས་བདག་གི་སྐྱབས། །
ཆོས་ཟབ་མོས་ཕན་བཏགས་ཕལ་ཆེ་བས། །
དུས་དེང་སང་བདག་ལ་ངན་སླ་བརྗོད། །

གཏམ་ངན་པས་གནོད་རྒྱུ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད། །
བསྔོད་པ་ཁྱོད་ཇེ་ལྷར་དགྱེས་དགྱེས་མཛོད། །

ས་ཕྱོགས་འདིའི་ཡོན་བདག་ཕལ་ཆེ་བས། །
དུས་དེང་སང་བདག་ལ་འབུལ་བ་བྱེད། །
ནོར་དངོས་པོས་ཕན་རྒྱུ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད། །
སྐུ་བསོད་ཁྱོད་ཇེ་ལྷར་དགྱེས་དགྱེས་མཛོད། །

དགོན་གྲྭ་ཚང་ཁྲི་གོག་ལ་སོགས་པ། །
དུས་དེང་སང་བདག་གིར་བཟུང་ན་ཡང་། །
དགོན་ཆོས་གྲྭས་ཕན་རྒྱུ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད། །
དགོན་ཆོས་གྲྭ་ཇེ་ལྷར་དགྱེས་དགྱེས་མཛོད། །

གཉེན་ཉེ་དུ་རུས་ལ་གཏོགས་པ་ཀུན། །
དུས་དེང་སང་བདག་གིར་བཟུང་ན་ཡང་། །
གཉེན་ཉེ་དུས་ཕན་རྒྱུ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད[9]། །
དབོན་[10]པོ་ཁྱོད་ཇེ་ལྷར་དགྱེས་དགྱེས་མཛོད། །

ཅེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་ཇོ་རྗེའི་ཆིག་ཏུ་སྨྲས་པའོ། ། ། །

[9] *med* ACD; *mad* B.
[10] *dbon* AC; *dpon* BD.

III-9, pp. 47/ 42-43

As for the wisdom of great bliss
The minds of all lord Buddhas of the three times,
The father, known as "Bstan 'dzin,"[11] my refuge,
Because of how [his] faithful subject appeared in [his] mind, [and]
Because of being the most useful through the deep religion,
These days has pronounced mean speech to me.

Mean speech causes no harm in any way!
Praise—make [me] very pleased in any way!

The majority of patrons of this area
These days make offerings to me.
Wealth and goods cause no benefit at all.
Merit—make [me] very pleased in any way!

Although these days [I] have taken as mine
A monastery, seminary, a clay throne, etc.,
A monastery and religious college cause no benefit at all.
Monastery and religious college—make [me] very pleased in
any way!

Although these days [I] have taken as mine
All those belonging to the clan,
Relatives cause no benefit at all.
Nephew—make [me] very pleased in any way!

This also was said by Skal ldan rgya mtsho as an adamantine pronouncement.

[11] Sde pa Chos rje Bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho

IV-1, pp. 64-67/ 58-61

My English translation is in Chapter 6.

དེ་ཡང་སྐབས་ཤིག་སེ་བའི་ལྗོན་ཤིང་འབྲས་བུ་དང་མེ་ཏོག་དང་ལོ་མའི་གཡུར་གྱིས་དུད་པའི་ཤིང་དྲུང་བར་བར་ན་ཉི་མའི་འོད་ཟེར་ཟླ་བའི་དུམ་བུ་དང་འདྲ་བ་དང་གཡུང་དྲུང་ལྷར་འཁྱིལ་བ་ལ་སོགས་པས་སྤྲས་པ་ཞིག་ན། ཀུ་རེ་དང་གད་བཞད་སོགས་བག་ཡངས་ཀྱི་ངང་ནས་གནས་པའི་ཚེ། བུང་བ་མང་པོ་གཤོག་པའི་གར་སྟབས་སྒྱུར་བཞིན་དུ། མགྲིན་པའི་ལམ་ནས་སྙན་ཚིག་གི་དར་དིར་གྱི་གླུ་འདི་བླངས་སོ། །

ཀྱེ་ཀྱེ་ཉོན་ཅིག་མང་ཐོས་ཤིང་དྲུང་པ། །
ཚེ་རབས་སྔོན་ནས་ཀུ་རེ་རྩེད་མོ་སོགས། །
བག་མེད་བྱ་བས་ཉིན་མཚན་འདས་པ་ལས། །
ཐོག་མེད་དུས་ནས་ད་བར་སྲིད་འདིར་འཁྱམས། །

ད་དུང་བྱ་བྱེད་ཆོས་དང་འགལ་ལུགས་འདིས། །
མཐོ་རིས་ཐར་བོའི་གཏན་གྱི་བདེ་སྐྱིད་ལ། །
ད་ནས་བཟུང་སྟེ་ཕྱི་ཕྱག་བྱེད་པ་འདྲ། །

བདེན་རྫུན་ཆོས་སེམས་སྙུན་ལ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ །
ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྩ་བ་རང་གི་སེམས་ལ་ཐུག །

སེམས་ཉིད་མ་ཐུལ་བར་དུ་དམ་པའི་ཆོས། །
ཇེ་ཙམ་བཤད་ཀྱང་ནེ་[12] ཙོས་ཆོས་བཤད་བཞིན། །
ཁ་བཤད་ཐོག་ཏུ་ཁིལ་བ་མི་གདའོ། །

སེམས་ཀྱི་གླང་པོ་རང་དགར་འཁྱམས་པ་འདི། །
དབེན་གནས་ཀ་བ་རབ་ཏུ་བརྟན་པོ་ལ། །

[12] *ne* BCD; *ne'u* A.

བླ་མའི་མན་ངག་ཐག་པས་མ་བཅིངས་ན། །
རྙེད་བཀུར་ནགས་ཁྲོད་རྒྱུ་བར་གནོན་མི་ཟ། །

བླ་མ་དམ་པས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བདུད་རྩི་ཡིས། །
རང་ལ་རྟག་ཏུ་ཅི་ཕན་མཛད་པས་ན། །
བཀའ་དྲིན་སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་སེམས་ཀུན་ལས་ལྷག །
གསོལ་བ་རྒྱུན་དུ་[13] ཐོབ་[14] དང་བྱིན་རླབས་འཇུག །

བྱིན་རླབས་ཞུགས་ན་ཉམས་རྟོགས་ཡོན་ཏན་སོགས། །
ངེད་ཅག་པདྨོའི་ཚལ་དུ་འདུས་པ་ལྟར། །
མ་བོས་པར་[15] ཡང་སྐད་ཅིག་ལ་འདུས་ནས། །
མཐོ་རིས་ཐར་བའི་[16] གྲོང་དུ་འཁྲིད་པར་བྱེད། །

དལ་འབྱོར་རྟེན་བཟང་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་ལྟར། །
ཤིན་ཏུ་རྙེད་པར་དཀའ་བ་ཐོབ་དུས་འདིར། །
དམ་ཆོས་ཟབ་མོའི་[17] སྙིང་པོ་མ་བླངས་ན། །
འཆི་ཚེ་འགྱོད་ཀྱང་འཕྱི་བར་[18] མི་འགྱུར་རམ། །

ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་སྔོན་ཆད་ཚེ་ཕྱེད་དོན་མེད་བྱས། །
ད་དུང་ཚེ་ལྷག་དོན་མེད་གཟད་པ་ལ། །
ཁྱོད་ནི་ཕ་ཡུལ་བདུད་ཀྱི་བཙོན་ར་འདིར། །
འདུག་པར་བྱེད་ན་ཁྱོད་ནི་མིར་མི་རྩི། །

ཅི་སྐྱིད་ཅེ་[19] ན་ཚེ་ནི་དོན་མེད་དུ། །
གླུ་གར་བཟའ་བཏུང་ལ་སོགས་དོན་མེད་ཀྱི། །

[13] *du* BCD; *tu* A.
[14] *thob* A; *thobs* BCD.
[15] *par* CD; *bar* AB.
[16] *ba'i* B; *pa'i* ACD.
[17] *mo'i* CD; *mos* AB.
[18] *'phyi bar* CD; *'phyis par* AB.
[19] *ce* BCD; *ces* A.

བྱ་བས་ཆུད་ཟོས་བགྱིད་ལ་ཁྱེད་ཅག་ལས། །
ངེད་ཅག་དུད་འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་ཤིན་ཏུ་མཁས། །

ངན་སོང་གསུམ་གྱི་འཇིགས་པས་ཡིད་སྐྲག་ནས། །
དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་ལ་སྙིང་ནས་སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་ཞིང་། །
སྡིག་སྤྱོང་དགེ་བ་ལྷུར་ལེན་སྐྱེས་བུ་དེ། །
འགྲོ་བ་གང་དུ་གནས་ཀྱང་བདེ་འགྲོ་བ། །
འཁོར་བའི་གནས་འདི་ཐམས་ཅད་མི་མུར་འོབས། །
འདོད་ཡོན་སྤུ་གྲིའི་སོར་ཆགས་སྦྲང་རྩི་བཞིན། །
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་ནི་རྒྱལ་སྲས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས། །
རྒྱུན་དུ་སྒོམ་པའི་ཐུགས་དམ་མཐིལ་ཡིན་ཡང་[20]། །
འདི་ཉིད་དོར་བས་གཞན་ཕན་བླ་མ་ཡིས། །
ཕྱོགས་འདི་གང་ལའང་ཁོ་བོ་ཡིད་མ་ཆེས། །

བདག་འཛིན་མི་འགོག་བདག་མེད་འགོག་བྱེད་པའི། །
ཆོས་ལུགས་མང་པོ་ས་ཕྱོགས་འདི་ན་སྣང་། །

ཀྱི་ཧུད་ཡིན་པ་བཞག་ནས་མིན་བྱེད་པའི། །
དུས་ངན་ཆོས་པ་ཕལ་ཆེར་སྙིང་རེ་རྗེ། །
དབང་བསྐུར་ཐོབ་ནས་དམ་ཚིག་མི་བསྲུང་བར། །
བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་བསྒོམས་ཀྱང་ཆུ་སྙིང་མཁར་དང་འདྲ། །
ཡིད་བརྟན་མི་རུང་ལམ་གྱི་གཞི་ནས་སློབ། །

ཅེས་ཟེར་བར[21]། ལན་དུ་འདི་སྐད་བདག་གིས་སྨྲས་སོ། །

སྤྲང་མ་མི་སྐད་སྨྲ་བ་ལྟས་ངན་ཡིན། །
ངེད་ཅག་མི་རྣམས་ཀུ་རེ་རྩེད་མོ་སོགས། །

[20] *yang* B; *kyang* ACD.
[21] *bar* CD; *bas* AB.

བྱ་བ་གང་ལ་འཇུག་ཀྱང་ངེད་ཅག་ཤེས། །
ཁྱེད་ཅག་ལབ་ལབ་མ་མང་སྒྲོག་ལ་སྡོ[22]། །

ཞེས་སླས་པའི་ལན་དུ།

སྒྲུང་མ་མི་སྐད་སླ་བ་ལྷས་ངན་མིན། །
མཁན་སློབ་སྤྱན་སྔར་རབ་ཏུ་ལེགས་བྱུང་ནས། །
ནག་ཆང་དམག་ཇག་ལ་སོགས་བྱེད་པ་ཡི། །
དགེ་སློང་དགེ་ཚུལ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྷས་ངན་ཡིན། །

སྒྲུང་མ་མི་སྐད་སླ་བ་ལྷས་ངན་མིན། །
དང་པོར་རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་ལ་ལེགས་སྦྱངས་ནས། །
བར་དུ་ཆོས་བཙོངས་གཞན་གྱི་ནོར་ལེན་པའི། །
གྲོང་ཆོག་མཁས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྷས་ངན་ཡིན། །

སྒྲུང་མ་མི་སྐད་སླ་བ་ལྷས་ངན་མིན། །
བླ་མའི་དྲིན་ལས་ཆོས་ལུང་མང་པོ་ཐོབ། །
ཅུང་ཟད་ཙམ་ལས་བླ་མ་ལེངས་འདོར་བའི། །
དམ་ཉམས་སློབ་མ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྷས་ངན་ཡིན། །

སྒྲུང་མ་མི་སྐད་སླ་བ་ལྷས་ངན་མིན། །
ཆོས་མི་ཤེས་ཀྱང་ཆོས་གདམ་གཞན་ལས་ཆེ། །
བླ་མའི་གཟུགས་ཀྱིས་ཐུབ་བསྟན་ཉམས་བྱེད་པའི། །
རྒྱུད་འཛིན་བླ་མ་ཕལ་ཆེར་ལྷས་ངན་ཡིན། །

སྒྲུང་མ་མི་སྐད་སླ་བ་ལྷས་ངན་མིན། །
རབ་བྱུང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མདའ་གཞུ་ལག་ཆ་བྱེད། །
མཐོན་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཁྲིལ་མེད་བྱ་བ་བྱེད། །
ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་འདི་ན་ལྷས་ངན་མིན་པ་གང་། །

22 *sdo* C; *bsdo* AD; *bsngo* B.

སྤྲང་མ་མི་སྐད་སྨྲ་བ་ལྟས་ངན་མིན། །
ཁྱད་པར་ཁྱོད་ཀྱང་དམ་ཆོས་ཤེས་བཞིན་དུ། །
ཉམས་ལེན་མི་བྱེད་གཞན་ལ་བཤད་པ་ཡིས། །
མི་མགོ་ཐབས་ཀྱིས་སྐོར་འདི་ལྟས་ངན་ཡིན། །

ཞེས་ཟེར་རོ། ། དེའི་ཚེ་ལན་དུ་འདི་སྐད་སྨྲས་སོ། །

ངས་བླ་མ་བརྒྱ་ཡི་ཞལ་མཐོང་ཡང་། །
ཆོས་དེ་ལས་ཟབ་པ་ངས་མ་ཐོས། །

ཁྱེད་བདེན་ནོ་བདེན་ནོ་སྤྲང་མ་བདེན། །
ད་མི་མགོ་མི་སྐོར་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད། །

ཅེས་[23]ཞུས་པས་འདི་སྐད་གསུང་། །

དམ་བཅས་པ་མ་དོར་དམ་བཅའ་གཉན། །
མནའ་བསྐྱལ་བ་མ་དོར་མནའ་ཚིག་[24]གཉན། །
ཁས་བླངས་པ་མ་དོར་ཁས་བླངས་གཉན། །
གཉན་དེ་གསུམ་མི་རྩེ་མི་ཁྱུར་མེད། །

ཁྱོད་དེ་དག་རྣམས་ལ་རྩེ་སྙམ་ན། །
བློ་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད་པར་དབེན་པར་ཞོག །

ངེད་སྤྲང་མ་ལ་སོགས་འདབ་ཆགས་རྣམས། །
ཁྱེད་སྐྱོ་ཆེ་གླུ་ཡི་མཆོད་པ་འབུལ། །

བློ་དྲན་རྒྱུ་མ་མང་གཅིག་ལ་དྲིལ། །

ལས་གཅིག་དྲིལ་ལྟ་བུར་འབད་བྱའི་ཆོས། །
ཚེ་བློས་བཏང་སེམས་ལ་ལྟ་བ་ཡིན། །

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23 *ces* BCD; *zhes* A.
24 *tshig* CD; *’tshig* AB.

དེ་གོ་ན་གདམས་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡིན། །

ཞེས་ཟེར་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས། དགའ་བ་དང་སྤྲོ་བ་དང་སྐྱོ་བ་ལྷན་ཅིག་ཏུ་སྐྱེས་ནས། སྒྲུབ་པ་ལ་འགྲོ་བར་ཐག་བཅད་དེ། ཡང་དེའི་ཚེ་འདི་སྐད་ཞུས་སོ། །

གྲོགས་པོ་སྤྲང་མ། །
སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ། །
སྒོམ་ལ་འགྲོའོ། །
སྙན་པའི་གླུ་ལོངས། །

ཞེས་ཞུས་སོ། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་གྱིས་སྦྱར་བའོ། ། ། །

IV-2, pp. 67-71/ 61-64

My English translation is in Chapter 6.

ཡང་སྐབས་ཤིག་བདག་གི་གཟན་ཤམ་[25]སོགས་ཀྱི་ངོས་ལ་ཕར་བལྟས་པས་ཤིག་མང་པོ་ནི་དལ་བུར་རྒྱུ། ལྗི་[26]བ་མང་པོ་ནི་ལྡིང་ཞིང་འཕྱོ། སྲོ་མང་མང་པོ་ནི་འཛུམ་ཞིང་འདུག་པ་ལ། འདི་སྐད་ཅེས་གྲོས་བཏབ་པོ། །

ཁྱེད་ཉོན་ཅིག་དལ་བུར་འབྱོན་པའི་ཤིག །
ཤིག་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་བདག་གི་ལུས་ལ་ཟོས། །

ཟོས་འཐུངས་ཆེ་ཁྱོད་ནི་སྐྱིད་ན་ཡང་། །
ཡང་བདག་གིས་མཐོང་ཆེ་ཁྱོད་ཅི་བསམ། །

བསམ་མེད་པའི་ལྗི་བ་ལྡིང་མཁས་ཁྱོད། །
ཁྱོད་སྐུ་སྤྱོད་འདི་དང་མ་བྲལ་ན། །
ན་གཞོན་རིང་དྲི་[27]ཤིར་འགྲོ་དོགས་འདུག །

འདུག་མི་འདུག་ཡང་ཡང་ཟོ་དང་གསལ། །

གསལ་དཀར་ཞིང་འཛུམ་པའི་སྲོ་མང་ཁྱོད། །
ཁྱོད་བལྟས་ཆེ་སྨུ་ཏིག་འདྲ་ན་ཡང་། །
ཡང་བདག་གི་གོས་རྣམས་སློད་[28]མཐོང་ཆེ། །
ཆེ་ཕྱི་མ་མི་དྲན་ཁྱོད་བཙོམ་འདོད། །

ཅེས་སླས་པས་ཤིག་ཀྲན་ཞིག་གིས་རང་གི་གྲོགས་རྣམས་བསྡུས་ནས་ཁ་ཏ་འདི་བྱས་སོ། །

[25] *sham* BCD; *shams* A.
[26] *lji* CD; *'ju* AB. This spelling variant is consistent throughout this *mgur* cycle. I have chosen *lji ba* (flea), because of a later description of the insects going up and down. This spelling variant will only be marked once.
[27] *dri* AC; *gri* BD.
[28] *slod* AB; *lhod* CD.

ང་ཤིག་རྐན་ཟ་མཁས་འཐུང་[29] མཁས་པས། །
དུས་ད་བར་བདེ་ཞིང་སྐྱིད་པར་བྱུང་། །

ཁྱོད་གཞོན་ནུ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་དུས་མིན་ཟོས། །
ད་ང་ཡང་དྲི་[30] ལ་འཆིར་འཇུག་གམ། །

ཞེས་ལབ་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ཤིག་རྐན་གཞོན་ཐམས་ཅད་གཅིག་གིས་གཅིག་ལ་འཆང་[31] ནས་ལྐོག་གྲོས་ཞིབ་ཏུ་བྱས་ནས་ཁ་མཐུན་པར་བདག་ལ་ལན་འདི་སྨྲས་སོ། །

ལས་དགེ་སྡིག་ངོ་ཤེས་བན་རྐན་ཁྱོད། །
ཆེ་སྤྲ་མར་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་གཞན་དག་ཟོས། །
དེའི་དབང་གིས་ངེད་ཅག་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཟ། །

ད་ཁྱོད་གསུང་མི་ལེན་དཀའ་མོར་འདུག །
གཙོ་བོར་ངེད་ལ་མ་གཏམ་ལས་ལ་སོམས། །

ཁྱོད་མི་སྤྲར་ངེད་མཐོང་མཆི་མ་འཆོར། །
ལྐོག་ངེད་ཅག་གང་ན་འདུག་བལྟས་ནས། །
སོ་སེན་མོས་གསོད་ལ་ཡིད་མ་ཆེས། །
ད་གསོད་ན་ཁྱོད་ཀྱང་ངེད་ཀྱིས་ཟ། །

དེ་མིན་ན་འོ་སྐོལ་ཡོན་མཆོད་ཆོ། །
དུས་གཏན་དུ་གཅིག་ལ་གཅིག་དགོས་ཡིན། །

ད་ཟ་འམ་མི་ཟ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཐུག །

ཅེས་ཟེར་རོ། ། ཡང་ལྦི་བ་རྣམས་ཁ་མཐུན་པར་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར་རོ། །

[29] *'thung* CD; *'thungs* AB.
[30] *dri* ACD; *gri* B.
[31] *'chang* CD; *'phyang* AB.

ཁྱེད་[32]ཉོན་དང་ངེད་ཀྱི་བླ་ར་མཁན། །
ངེད་ཡར་མར་གཉིས་སུ་ལྡིང་རེས་བྱེད། །

ཁྱེད་ཁམས་གསུམ་འཁོར་བའི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་འདིར། །
རེས་ཡར་ལྡིང་རེས་ནི་མར་ལ་ལྡིང་། །

ཁྱེད་མ་འདུག་མ་འདུག་ཡར་ལ་ལྡིང་། །
ཡར་རི་རྩེ་དབེན་ཞིང་ཉམས་དགར་ལྡིང་། །

སེམས་ཆོས་ཉིད་ནམ་མཁའི་དབྱིངས་སུ་ལྡིང་། །
ང་མ་བསྡིག་[33]ང་བཞིན་ཡར་ལ་ལྡིང་། །

ཟེས་ཟེར་རོ། ཡང་སྤྲོ་མང་རྣམས་འཛུམ་བཞིན་དུ་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར་རོ། །

ང་གོས་སྲུབས་[34]བསམ་གཏན་ཁང་པ་ན། །
ལུས་གཡོ་འགུལ་མེད་པར་ཏིང་འཛིན་བསྒོམ། །

ཁྱོད་གཅིག་པུར་ཏིང་འཛིན་སྒོམ་[35]སྤྲོ་ན། །
ཁྱོད་ང་ལ་མ་འཚེ་ང་བཞིན་འདུག །

ཅེས་ཟེར་རོ། ། དེའི་ཚེ་བདག་གིས་ཤིག་ལྤེ་བ་སྤྲོ་མང་རྣམས་ལ་གདམ་ལབ་འདི་
བྱས་སོ།།

ཁྱེད་གླེན་ཞིང་ལྐུགས་པའི་འབུ་སྲིན་རྣམས། །
ང་མི་ཡི་ནང་ནས་་[36]བཙུན་པ་ཡིན། །
ཁྱོད་སྲིན་བུའི་[37]ནང་ནས་ཐ་ཤལ་ཡིན། །
ཁྱོད་ང་ལ་གྲོས་འདེབས་ཨ་རེ་མཚར། །

[32] *khyed* ACD; *khyod* B.
[33] *bsdig* CD*; sdigs* AB.
[34] *srubs* CD; *srub* AB.
[35] *sgom* D; *bsgom* ABC.
[36] *yi nang nas* ABD; *yin nga n*i C.
[37] *srin bu'i* ABC; *'bu srin bu'i* D.

ཞེས་སླས་པས་ཤིག་ལྷི་བ་སྒོ་མང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་བདག་ལ་སྡིགས་[38] གདམ་འདི་ཟེར་རོ། །

ང་ཤིག་དང་ལྷི་བ་སྒོ་མང་རྣམས། །
ང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབང་དུ་བྱེད་ན་ཡང་། །
ཁོང་བླ་མ་ཆོས་རྗེ་མན་ཆད་ནས། །
བན་སྤྲང་པོ་ཡན་ཆད་ངེད་ཆོས་ཁྲུབ། །

ལུགས་འཇིག་རྟེན་དབང་དུ་བྱེད་ན་ཡང་། །
མཐོ་རྒྱལ་པོ་བཙུན་མོ་བློན་པོ་དང་། །
འབངས་ཕྱུག་པོ་དཔའ་བོ་ཁས་དྲག་སོགས། །
ངས་མ་ཟོས་མ་འཐུངས་གང་ཡང་མེད། །

ངེད་འདིར་ཚོགས་ནང་ན་ཤིག་ཚན་ཅིག
མདོག་ནག་ཅིང་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཁ་ཆ་བ། །
ཁྱེད་དཀར་ཟན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དཀར་ཤིག་ཟེར། །

ཁྱེད་ཤི་ཟས་འདད་[39] ཟས་ཟ་རིང་ལ། །
ངས་[40] ཁྱོད་[41] ལ་ཟ་བ་ཆོས་ཉིད་ཡིན། །

ངེད་འདིར་བཞུགས་ནང་གི་ལྷི་བ་རྣམས། །
རིའི་རྩེར་བཞུགས་སྒོམ་ཆེན་རྣམས་མི་ཟ། །

ཁྱོད་གྲོང་པར་འཁྱམས་པའི་གྲོང་ཆོག་པ། །
ཁོ་བོའི་ཁ་ཟས་ཡིན་ཟེར་ལྡིང་ཞིང་འདུག །

[38] *sdigs* BC; *bsdigs* AD.
[39] *'dad* C; *dad* ABD.
[40] *ngas*, against the two readings in ABCD: *nges* ABD; *des* C.
[41] *khyod* CD*;* *khyed* AB.

ཡང་ཉོན་ཅིག་ཉོན་ཅིག་བན་རྒན་ཉོན། །
ཁྱོད་ཤི་ཟས་འདད་[42] ཟས་མ་ཟ་དང་། །
དཀོར་ནག་པོའི་ཤིག་གིས་ཁྱོད་མི་ཟ། །

ཁྱོད་གྲོང་པར་མ་འཁྱམས་རི་ཁྲོད་འགྲིམས། །

གནས་དབེན་ཞིང་ཉམས་དགར་རྩྭ་སྔོན་སྙིང་། །
ཁྱོད་བདེ་བར་བཞུགས་དང་ཟླི་བ་རྣམས། །
ཁྱེད་ཐུགས་སྲུན་ནམ་ཡང་མི་བྱེད་པར། །
ངེད་འདིར་ཚོགས་[43] རྣམས་ཀྱིས་དམ་ལ་གཞག །

ཡང་ཡུད་ཙམ་སྙམ་གྱི་བུ་ག་གཏོད། །
མི་གཞན་ལ་མ་ལྟ་རང་ལ་ལྟོས། །
མི་གཞན་ལྟ་རྒྱང་གིས་རང་དོན་ཆོར། །

རང་དོན་ཤོར་བསྟན་དང་འགྲོ་དོན་གྱིས། །
ནམ་འཆི་ཆེ་བསླུ་བར་གདོན་མི་ཟ། །

ངེད་ཤིག་སྒྲོ་ཟླི་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀུན། །
ཁྱེད་ཤ་ཁྲག་ཟ་ཞིང་འཐུང་པ་ལ། །
གྲོས་མི་དགོས་ཟློ་ནི་མཐུན་པ་ལྟར། །
ཁྱེད་བསྟན་ལ་རབ་བྱུང་བན་རྒན་རྣམས། །
ཆེ་ཟློས་བཏང་དམ་ཆོས་བྱེད་པ་ལ། །
གྲོས་མི་དགོས་གྱིས་[44] དང་ཀུན་དང་མཐུན། །
ཁྱེད་འཁོར་གཡོག་མེད་པས་ཡིད་མ་སྐྱོ། །

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[42] *'dad* C; *dad* ABD.
[43] *tshogs* CD; *'tshogs* AB.
[44] *gyis* BCD; *kyis* A.

ཁྱོད་རྫོགས་སངས་དོན་དུ་གཉེར་ཞིག་དང་། །
ཁྱོད་ནམ་ཞིག་སངས་རྒྱས་ཐོབ་པའི་ཚེ། །
ངེད་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་འཁོར་གཡོག་གོ །

ཡང་ཉོན་དང་སྒོམ་ལ་བཞུགས་པའི་དུས། །
ངེད་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་[45] ཁྱེད་ལ་ཟློས་པའི་ཚེ། །
ཚེ་སྔ་མའི་ལས་སུ་དྲན་གྱིས་ལ། །
ལས་སྡིག་སྦྱོང་དགེ་བ་སྒྲུབ་པར་ཞུ། །

ཞེས་ཟེར་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སྒོམ་ལ་འགྲོ་བར་ཐག་བཅད་དེ། འདི་སྐད་ཞུས་སོ། །

རྗེ་བླ་མའི་བྱིན་རླབས་ཞུགས་པ་ལས། །
ཤིག་སྲོ་མང་ལྡེ་བས་ཆོས་བཤད་བྱས། །

ཆོས་ཟབ་མོས་བདག་བློ་ཆོས་ལ་བསྒྱུར། །
ཆོས་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་ཕྱིར་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ། །

ཞེས་ཞུས་པས་འདི་ཟེར་རོ། །

ཁྱེད་ཁ་བཤད་ལྷུང་ལ་མ་བསྐུར་[46] བར། །
རང་བསམ་དོན་ལག་ཏུ་ལོངས་ཤིག་ཨང་། །

ཆོས་ཤེས་པས་མི་ཆོག་ཉམས་ལེན་དགོས། །
ད་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་ཕྱིར་དབེན་པར་སོངས། །

ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ། །

འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་གྱིས་སྦྱར་བའོ། ། །།

[45] *kyis* ABC; *kyang* D.
[46] *bskur* BCD; *skur* A.

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ཨོཾ་སྭ་སྟི།

དགེ་སྦྱོར་གྱི་མི་ཏོག །
དད་གུས་ཀྱི་ཆུ་བོས། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བརླན་ཀྱང་། །
རྣམ་གཡེང་གི་སེར་བས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བཅོམ་ཡ། །

དགེ་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྨྱུ་གུ། །
ལྗང་རིགས་ཀྱི་དྲོད་ཀྱིས། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བསྐྱངས་ཀྱང་། །
དཀོར་སྒྲིབ་ཀྱི་བ་མོས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ཁྱེར་ཡ། །

དད་གུས་ཀྱི་རྟ་བཟང་། །
ཡོན་ཏན་གྱི་ཐང་ལ། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བརྒྱུགས་ཀྱང་། །
ལོག་རྟོག་གི་སྒྲོག་ཏུ། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ཆུད་ཡ། །

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་བང་མཛོད། །
ལེགས་སྤྱད་ཀྱི་ནོར་བུས། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བཀང་ཡང་། །
བག་མེད་ཀྱི་རྐུན་མས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བརླགས་[47]ཡ། །

[47] *brlags* CD; *brlag* AB.

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Oṃ swa sti

Although the flower of good behavior
Was watered again and again
By the river of faith and respect,
[It] was helplessly vanquished
By the hailstorm of laziness. Hey!

Although the sprouts of virtuous thoughts
Were tended again and again
By the warmth of scripture and logic,
[They] were helplessly carried away
By the cattle of wealth-obscurations. Hey!

Although the good horse of faith and respect
Was made to gallop again and again
On the plain of qualities,
[He] got helplessly caught
In the tethering ropes of false knowledge. Hey!

Although the treasury of monastic vows
Was filled again and again
With the jewels of good practice,
[It] was helplessly overthrown
By the thief of carelessness. Hey!

བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཀྱི་གླྀ་བ། །
ཐོས་བསམ་གྱི་ནམ་མཁར། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་ཤར་ཡང་། །
སྙོམ་[48] ལས་[49] ཀྱི་གཟའ་ཡིས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ཟིན་ཡ། །

བདེན་ཚིག་གི་མེ་ལྕེ། །
ཆོས་གདམ་གྱི་ནགས་ལ། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་འབར་ཡང་། །
རྫུན་ཚིག་གི་ཆར་བས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བསད་ཡ། །

རྣམ་དཔྱོད་ཀྱི་བུམ་པར། །
ལེགས་བཤད་ཀྱི་བདུད་རྩི། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བླུགས་ཀྱང་། །
ལོག་རྟོག་གི་ཐོ་བས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བཅོམ་ཡ། །

དག་སྣང་གི་ཉ་མོ། །
མཁས་མང་གི་མཚོ་ལ། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་ཕྱིན་ཀྱང་། །
ཆགས་སྡང་གི་ལྕགས་ཀྱུས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ཟིན་ཡ། །

48 *snyom* BCD; *snyoms* A.
49 *las* ACD; *pas* B.

Although the moon of diligence
Appeared again and again
In the sky of hearing and considering,
[It] was helplessly eclipsed
By the planet of indolence.[50] Hey!

Although the flame of truthful words
Burned again and again
In the forest of religious discourse,
[It] was helplessly extinguished
By the rain of untruthful speech. Hey!

Although the nectar of eloquent explanations
Poured again and again
Into the vessel of knowledge,
[It] was helplessly subdued
By the large hammer of erroneous discrimination. Hey!

Although the fish of pure vision
Went again and again
Into the lake of many scholars,
[It] was helplessly consumed
By the iron hook of attachment. Hey!

[50] The planet is Rāhula.

འདོད་ཆུང་གི་བྲག་རི། །
ཚོག་ཤེས་ཀྱི་སྐྱང་གིས། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་བརྒྱན་ཀྱང་། །
མངོན་ཞེན་གྱི་ཐོག་གིས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བཤིགས་ཡ། །

ཞི་དུལ་གྱི་རི་དྭགས། །
འདུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་རི་ཁར། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་རྒྱུ་ཡང་། །
གྲོགས་ངན་གྱི་ཤ་ཁྱིས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བཟུང་ཡ། །

ཁྲིལ་ཡོད་ཀྱི་དུང་དཀར། །
དྲན་ཤེས་ཀྱི་དར་གྱིས། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་སྤྲས་ཀྱང་། །
ལོག་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་ལག་རྡོས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བཅག་ཡ། །

དབེན་འདོད་ཀྱི་སྟག་མོ། །
མགུར་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་ནགས་[51] སུ། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་མཆོངས་[52] ཀྱང་། །
འདོད་ཡོན་གྱི་ས་མདས[53]། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་ཕོག་ཡ། །

[51] *nags* CD; *nag* AB.
[52] *mchongs* B; *'phyongs* ACD.
[53] *gyi sa mdas* BCD; *gyis mda' yis* A.

Although the rock mountain of few desires
Was adorned again and again
By the meadow of being satisfied,
[It] was helplessly devastated
By the lightning of passion. Hey!

Although the deer of gentle disposition
Played[54] again and again
On the snow mountain of *Vinaya*
[They] were helplessly seized
By the hunting dogs of evil friends. Hey!

Although the white conch of modesty
Was adorned again and again
By the silk of mindfulness,
[It] was smashed helplessly
By the small stone of false practice. Hey!

Although the tigress of desire for solitude
Leapt up again and again
In the forest of *mgur* melodies,
[She] was helplessly struck
By the pit's arrow[55] of sensual pleasures. Hey!

[54] I have translated the present tense verb *rtse* in the past here, according to context.

[55] This refers to a type of booby trap for animals.

བསྙིན་སྒྲིབ་ཀྱི་ངང་བ། །
གཟུངས་སྤོགས་ཀྱི་མཚོ་མོར། །
ཡང་ཡང་དུ་ཞུགས་ཀྱང་། །
གཉིད་རྨུགས་ཀྱི་རྙི་[56] ཡིས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་བཟུང་ཡ། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ནི་ཨ་ཚུང་གནམ་རྫོང་ནས་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་བྲིས་པའོ། ། ། །

[56] *rnyi* BCD; *snyi* A.

Although the swan of mantra recitation and meditation
Entered again and again
Into the lake of *dharani*s,
[It] was helplessly ensnared
By the net of sleepiness and mental lethargy. Hey!

Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote this in A chung gnam rdzong.

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འོ་འོ་ཕ་རྒོད་བློ་བཟང་གྲགས་པ། །
ཨའུ་གདན་གྱི་སྐྱབས་གནས་ཡིན་ལ། །
ཁོ་རེ་སྙིང་ནས་གུས་པས་འདུད་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉིང་ཁུ་ཡིན་ལ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ཚུལ་བཞིན་ཉམས་སུ་ལོངས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དམ་པ། །
ཨའུ་དངོས་གྲུབ་འབྱུང་གནས་ཡིན་ལ། །
ཁོ་རེ་བསམ་དང་སྦྱོར་བས་སྟེན་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་དལ་འབྱོར་ཚང་བའི་མི་ལུས། །
ཨའུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་རྙེད་པར་དཀའ་ལ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་[57] སྙིང་པོ་ལོངས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

[57] *kyi* CD; *kyis* AB.

IV-8, pp. 77-79/ 69-71

Oh yeah! Prudent father Blo bzang grags pa
Hey you! is a place of perpetual refuge! Hey!
Hey! Bow [to him] with respect from the heart!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The *Gradual Stages of Enlightenment*
Hey you! is the essence of religion. Hey!
Hey! Practice in accordance with [its] manner!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The holy glorious lama
Hey you! is the origin of the spiritual powers. Hey!
Hey! Attend to [him] in mind and deed!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The human body which is replete with the eighteen conditions
Hey you! is very hard to obtain. Hey!
Hey! Receive the essence of religion.
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

འོ་འོ་ཀུན་ལ་དབང་བསྒྱུར་འཆི་བདག་
ཨའུ་ནམ་འོང་ངེས་པ་མེད་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ཆེ་འདི་བློ་ཡིས་ཐོངས་[58]དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་དཀར་ནག་ལས་འབྲས་ཕྲ་ཞིབ། །
ཨའུ་ཕྱི་བཞིན་ངེས་པར་འབྲང་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་བླང་དོར་ཞིབ་མོ་གྱིས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་སྒྱུར་ཉི་གཏིང་ཟབ་འཁོར་བ། །
ཨའུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཡ་རེ་ང་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་མི་ཡི་འོབས་ལྷར་ལྷོས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་སྒོས་[59]སུ་ངན་སོང་སྡུག་བསྔལ། །
ཨའུ་ཙུང་ཟད་བཟོད་ཐབས་མེད་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་མཆོག་གསུམ་སྐྱབས་སུ་བོས་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

[58] Skal ldan rgya mtsho uses the spelling *thongs* frequently in the *Mgur 'bum* for the imperative of *gtong*.

[59] *sgos* BCD; *dgos* A.

Oh yeah! There is no certainty as to when
Hey you! the Lord of Death, the sovereign over all, will
arrive. Hey!
Hey! Resign to this death [of yours] entirely! Hey!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! It's certain that fine white and black karma
Hey you! will follow [you in death]. Hey!
Hey! Accept or reject [something] meticulously!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! In general, deep samsara
Hey you! is very frightful. Hey!
Hey! Watch it as if it is a fiery pit! Hey!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! There is no way to bear privately
Hey you! the evil forms of rebirth and suffering even a
little. Hey!
Hey! Take refuge in the Three Jewels!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

འོ་འོ་དམ་པའི་ལྷ་ཆོས་ཟབ་མོ། །
ཨའུ་འདི་ཕྱི་ཀུན་ཏུ་ཕན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་བསླབ་གསུམ་ནན་ཏན་མཛོད་དང་། །
ཏེ་ཏེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་ཉམ་ཐག་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད། །
ཨའུ་དྲིན་ཅན་ཞ་སྨག་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ཕན་སེམས་ཕྱོགས་མེད་སྦྱོངས་དང་། །
ཏེ་ཏེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་གོ་འཕང་། །
ཨའུ་ཞེན་དུ་འཐོབ་[60] པར་དཀའ་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་རྟག་ཏུ་འཐོབ་[61] ཕྱིར་འབོད་དང་། །
ཏེ་ཏེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་ཆོས་ཀུན་གདོད་མའི་གཤིས་ལུགས།
ཨའུ་མཐའ་བྲལ་ཆོས་དབྱིངས་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་ནམ་མཁའ་ལྟ་བུར་སྒོམས་དང་། །
ཏེ་ཏེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འོ་འོ་ཐ་མལ་སྐྱེ་ཞི་བར་དོ། །
ཨའུ་སྦྱངས་འབྲས་སྐུ་གསུམ་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་སྦྱོང་བྱེད་བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་སྒོམས་དང་། །
ཏེ་ཏེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

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[60] *'thob* CD; *thob* AB.
[61] *'thob* CD; *thob* AB.

Oh yeah! The deep and holy divine religion
Hey you! will benefit [us] in all present and future lives. Hey!
Hey! Diligently perform the three teachings.
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! All feeble and weak sentient beings
Hey you! are simply [your] kind [mothers]. Hey!
Hey! Practice benefiting [others] with an impartial mind.
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The citadel of a perfect Buddha
Hey you! is very hard to obtain. Hey!
Hey! Always strive in order to obtain it.
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The primordial empty nature of all *dharma*s
Hey you! is the limitless *dharmadhātu*. Hey!
Hey! Meditate [on it] like the sky!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

Oh yeah! The result of what has been purified
Hey you! of ordinary birth, death and *bar do* is the three *kāya*s. Hey!
Hey! Meditate on the Generation and Completion Stages, which are the purifying agents.
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

འོ་འོ་མདོ་སྔགས་ཆོས་ཀུན་བསྡུས་ན། །
ཨཱུ་ཆོས་བློ་འདི་ཉིད་ཡིན་ཡ། །
ཁོ་རེ་རྒྱང་[62]གླུའི་ཚུལ་དུ་འཐེན་དང་། །
ཧེ་ཧེ་བློ་བདེ་དཔལ་ཡིན་ཨེ་གོ །
ཡ་ཡི་ཡ་ཡི། །

འདི་ནི་རོང་པོའི་ཨཱུ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་རང་ལ་ཀུ་རེར་སྨྲས་པའོ། ། ། །

[62] *rgyang* BCD; *rgyangs* A.

Oh yeah! If [you] gather all teachings of the sutras
and tantras,
Hey you! this itself is the dance of religion.
Hey! Sing in the manner of a song from afar! Hey!
Ha ha! The mind is happy and glorious, get it?
Ya yi ya yi!

The Hey you! Skal ldan rgya mtsho of Rong bo said this to himself in jest.

IV-9, pp. 79-80/ 71-72

ཨ་མེ་བླ་མ་བསྙེན་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
བྱིན་རླབས་དངོས་གྲུབ་དོན་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་ལ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཨ་མེ་མི་ཚེ་གཟད་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
ཕྱི་མར་བདེ་འགྲོའི་དོན་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
སྡིག་ཅན་འཆི་ཀར་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཨ་མེ་འཆི་བདག་བཏུད་[63] ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
ཚེ་སྲོག་བརྟན་པའི་དོན་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
མི་མང་འཆི་ཚུལ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཨ་མེ་ལས་འབྲས་ཞིབ་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
གཏན་གྱི་བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
རང་གི་མཛད་སྤྱོད་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཨ་མེ་ངན་སོང་སྡུག་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
འོ་སྐོལ་སྐྱིད་སྡུག་དོན་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
ཆོས་སེམས་བསྟུན་[64] ལ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཨ་མེ་སྐྱོ་ཤས་ཡལ་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
རབ་བྱུང་ཆོས་པའི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
བློ་སྦྱོང་འདུལ་བ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

[63] *btud* ACD; *btul* B. I have chosen *btud*, the pf. of *'dud*, in the sense of "*thag je nyer song ba*," through communication with the Rong bo scholar Blo bzang chos grags.

[64] *bstun*, against all readings of ABCD, which have *stun*, at the suggestion of Blo bzang chos grags.

IV-9, pp. 79-80/ 71-72

Oh my—this way of having relied on a lama
For the benefits of blessings and spiritual powers! Uh huh!
Look at the pronouncements of the Victorious One, and
reconsider it!

Oh my—this way in which [you] have consumed human life
For the purpose of going to happiness in a future life! Uh huh!
Look at [being at] the point of death with sins, and reconsider it!

Oh my—this way of having approached the Lord of Death
For the purpose of a stable life! Uh huh!
Look at how many people die, and reconsider it!

Oh my—this manner of detail about karma
In the context of perpetual happiness! Uh huh!
Look at [your] own activities,[65] and reconsider it!

Oh my—this way of suffering in the lower realms
For the purpose of our own welfare! Uh huh!
Look at religion in accordance with the mind, and reconsider it!

Oh my! This way of going without paying attention to sorrow
In the context of religious renunciation! Uh huh!
Look at the disciplines of *Blo sbyong* and *Vinaya*, and reconsider it!

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[65] Though the honorific verb form *mdzad* is used here, "you" seems to mean himself. If so, it is most probable that the honorific was inserted by disciples later.

ཨ་མི་འགྲོ་ཀུན་དོར་རྩལ་འདི་ལ། །
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
དགྲ་གཉེན་མཐོང་ཆེ་ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡི། །

ཨ་མི་བདེན་པར་འཛིན་རྩལ་འདི་ལ། །
ཟབ་ལམ་ལྷ་བའི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
ང་ར་འཛིན་ཨ་འཐས་ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡི། །

ཨ་མི་སྦྱང་གཞི་རྒྱུས་རྩལ་འདི་ལ། །
སྦྱངས་འབྲས་སྐུ་གསུམ་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
རྒྱུད་སྡེའི་ལེགས་བཤད་ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡི། །

ཨ་མི་ཟ་ཉལ་དགའ་རྩལ་འདི་ལ། །
དཀའ་ཐུབ་བཙུད་ལེན་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
གཉིད་སྙོངས་ཟན་[66] ཆོད་ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡི། །

ཨ་མི་ལེ་ལོ་ཆེ་རྩལ་འདི་ལ། །
བྱ་བ་གང་བརྩམས་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
སྒྱུར་གྱི་གནས་རྩལ་[67] ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡི། །

ཨ་མི་དྲན་རྒྱུ་མང་རྩལ་འདི་ལ། །
མཐར་ཕྱིན་བྱ་བའི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
བློ་མང་གཞན་ལ་ལྷོས་དང་གོ་ཡི། །

[66] *zan* BCD; *bar* A.
[67] *tshul* ABC; *la* D.

Oh my! This way of having rejected all beings
In the context of bodhisattva [practices]! Uh huh!
When [you] see an enemy or a friend, look, and reconsider it!

Oh my! This way of seizing on the truth
In the context of the view of the profound path! Uh huh!
Look at the stubbornness of clinging to self, and reconsider it!

Oh my! This way of having increased the basis of purification
In the context of the fruit of purification, the three *kāya*s! Uh huh!
Look at the good explanations of the tantras, and reconsider it!

Oh my! This way of enjoying eating and sleeping
In the context of ascetic practice and taking essences![68] Uh huh!
Renounce sleep, measure food, look, and reconsider it!

Oh my! This manner of great laziness
In the context of whatever activities [you] have begun! Uh huh!
Look at [your] previous situation, and reconsider it!

Oh my! This manner of many causes for remembrance
In the context of actions that go to the very limit! Uh huh!
Look at many other attitudes, and reconsider it!

[68] This refers to the *rasāyana* practices such as an ascetic practice in which one eats only prepared balls of flowers.

ཨ་མེ་[69] སྐད་དཔངས་[70] དམའ་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
མགུར་དབྱངས་སྙན་མོའི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཏ་ཏ། །
གཅིག་པུར་འཐེན་[71] ལ་ལྟོས་དང་གོ་ཡེ། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ནི་རོང་པོའི་གླུ་བ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་སྦྱར་བའོ། །

[69] *a me* CD; *e ma* AB.
[70] *dpangs* CD; *dbang* AB.
[71] *'then* CD; *then* AB.

Oh my! This way with a high and low voice
In the context of pleasant-sounding melodies! Uh huh!
Look at singing in solitude, and reconsider it!

This was composed by the Rong bo songster Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

V-8, pp. 100-101/ 90

ཨོཾ་སྭ་སྟི། །

བདེ་མཆོག་གི་ངོ་བོ་བླ་མ་དང་། །
བདེ་ཆེན་གྱི་དཔལ་སྟེར་ཧེ་རུ་ཀ །
བདེ་ལྡན་གྱི་གནས་ནས་རྟག་ཏུ་གཟིགས། །

བདེ་ཉམས་ཀྱི་གླུ་དབྱངས་འདི་ལྟར་འཐེན། །

བདེ་ལེགས་ཀྱི་རྩ་བ་བླ་མ་ལ[72]། །
བདེ་བླག་ཏུ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པ་འདི། །
བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཀྱི་ཉི་མ་འཆར་ཐབས་སུ། །
བདེ་གཤེགས་ཀུན་མཐུན་པར་ཡང་ཡང་གསུངས། །

བདེ་སྟེར་གྱི་ཐབས་མཆོག་དམ་པའི་ཆོས། །
བདེ་ལེགས་ཀྱི་ལམ་རྟེན་དལ་འབྱོར་ལུས། །
བདེ་མེད་ཀྱི་འཁོར་བར་སྙིང་དཀའ་བས། །
བདེ་སྡུག་ལ་མ་ལྟ་སྙིང་པོ་ལོངས། །

བདེ་བ་ནས་བདེ་བར་འགྲོ་བསམ་ན། །
བདེ་མཆོག་སོགས་ཡི་དམ་བསྙེན་སྒྲུབ་དང་། །
བདེ་སྡུག་སོགས་ཆོས་བརྒྱད་མགོ[73]སྙོམས་དང་། །

བདེ་བ་ལ་འགྲོ་ཀུན་འགོད་འདོད་སོགས། །
བདེ་བླག་ཏུ་བསྒྲུབས་ན་ཅིས་ཀྱང་ལེགས། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་མི་ཕག་གི་ལོར་སྦྱར་བ་བཀྲ་ཤིས། ། ། །

[72] *la* ABC; *las* D.
[73] *mgo* CD; *'go* AB.

V-8, pp. 100-101/ 90

Om sva sti

The lama, essence of Bde mchog and
He ru ka, who bestows the glory of great bliss
Please look [upon me] always from Bde ba can.

[I]'ll sing accordingly a song of blissful experiences.

This happy petition to the lama, the root of well-being,
Has been said over and over in harmony with
All those who have entered into eternal bliss,
As a means for the sun of happiness to shine.

Because it is difficult to obtain a body, a good foundation, the path of well-being
[And the path for] the holy religion, the most supreme means for giving happiness,
In samsara, where there is no happiness,
Without regard for happiness and suffering, obtain the essence.

If [you] are thinking[74] of going from happiness to happiness,
Recite the mantras and propitiate the tutelary deities such as Bde mchog and
Equalize the distinctions of the eight worldly *dharma*s, such as happiness and suffering.

If [you] easily established happiness [through] the desire to transfer all beings into a happy state and so on,
By all means [your happiness] is good.

This also was composed by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, in the year 1647. Happiness!

[74] I have interpreted *bsam*, the future stem, in the present, according to the sense here.

V-11, pp. 104-105/ 93-94

རྗེ་བཀའ་དྲིན་མཉམ་མེད་བློ་བཟང་གྲགས། །
འབངས་ཆོས་མེད་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ལ། །
ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བས་གཟིགས་ལ་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །

ཚེ་འདི་ཕྱིའི་ལེགས་ཚོགས་ཀུན་གྱི་གཞི། །
ཕ་བླ་མ་དམ་པར་མ་ཤེས་པར། །
སྐྱོན་ཕུང་པོར་འཛིན་པའི་ལོག་རྟོག་མཁན། །
ཁྱོད་བཀའ་བཅུའི་མིང་ཅན་སྙིང་རུལ་ལམ། །

དུས་ད་ལྟའི་བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཡོན་ཏན་རྣམས། །
རྗེ་བླ་མའི་དྲིན་དུ་མི་གོ་བའི། །
ཁྱོད་ཆོས་བཤད་མཁན་པོ་སྨྱོས་སམ་ཅི། །

རྟེན་རྙེད་དཀའི་མི་ལུས་ཐོབ་དུས་འདིར། །
ཚེ་ཕྱི་མའི་དོན་ཀུན་བློས་དོར་བའི། །
ཁྱོད་དཔེ་མང་ལྟ་མཁན་སེམས་མེད་དམ། །

གྲོགས་ཞལ་ཆེར་འཆི་བ་མཐོང་བཞིན་དུ། །
རང་འཆི་སྙམ་མེད་པའི་བསམ་མེད་པོ། །
ཁྱོད་རང་སྙིང་རང་ལ་མི་རྗེའམ[75]། །

གནས་ངན་སོང་ཟེར་བའི་འཇིགས་ཅན་དེར། །
ལས་སྡིག་པས་འཁྲིད་དོགས་མི་སྙམ་པའི། །
ཁྱོད་གླེན་པ་འདོ་[76]མེད་མ་འཁྲུལ་ལམ། །

[75] *rje'am* AB; *rje 'am* CD.
[76] *'do* B; *mdo* ACD.

V-11, pp. 104-105/ 93-94

Lord Blo bzang grags, unequalled in kindness,
[Please] look with compassion upon [your] servant,
Skal ldan rgya mtsho, one without religion, and bless [him].

You, expert in false knowledge, cling to a pile of falsehoods
Without understanding that [his] father lama is holy,
The foundation of all good accumulations in this and future lives.
Aren't you a rotten-hearted one with the title of *Bka' bcu*?[77]

You don't understand that your present happiness
Is because of the lama's kindness.
You master of Dharma discourses, are you crazy or what?

You have rejected all concerns for a future life
In this time of having obtained a human body, in which acquiring a
support is difficult.
You who have looked at all kinds of books, have [you] no mind?

You haven't given a thought to [your] lack of thought for your
own death
While watching the deaths of most of [your] friends.
Should you not have pity on your own heart [for being like this]?

You don't imagine the fear of being led by sinful actions
Into that dreadful place called the lower three realms.
You senseless fool, aren't [you] mistaken?

[77] *Bka' bcu pa*, the one [having mastered] ten texts, is a title given to monks.

སྐྱབས་བསླུ་མེད་དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་པོ་ལ། །
ཁས་སྐྱབས་འཛིན་ཞི་ནས་བློ་ལོག་པའི། །
ཁྱོད་མཁས་པའི་སྙིང་ལ་གདོན་ཞུགས་སམ། །

ལས་ནག་པོས་གནོད་པར་ཤེས་བཞིན་དུ། །
སྡིག་རྐྱང་བའི་པོའི་བྱ་བས་དུས་འདའ་བའི། །
ཁྱོད་སྡིག་ཅན་འཆི་དུས་མི་འགྱོད་དམ། །

ལས་དགེ་བས་ཕན་པར་གོ་བཞིན་དུ། །
བློས་ལིངས་ཀྱིས་སྐྱུར་བའི་བྱ་བ་ལ། །
ཁྱོད་བསམ་ཞིང་ཡི་མུག་མི་ལྡང་ངམ། །

མཐོ་སྲིད་པའི་རྟེ་ནས་མནར་མེད་བར[78]། །
དུས་རྟག་ཏུ་སྡུག་བསྔལ་ཀུན་གྱིས་གཙེས། །
ཁྱོད་ད་དུང་གནས་དེའི་རྒྱུ་བསྒྲུབ་བམ། །

མ་ཁམས་གསུམ་འཁོར་བའི་སེམས་ཅན་ལ། །
ཕན་འདོགས་པར་འདོད་པའི་བློ་མེད་པའི། །
ཁྱོད་ཆོས་པའི་མིང་གིས་ཀུན་བསླུའམ[79]། །

གྱོད་སྣ་དགུ་གཡོ་མཁན་བདག་འཛིན་ཡིན། །
གདོན་དེ་ཉིད་སྙིང་ལ་རྟག་ཞུགས་པའི། །
ཁྱོད་སྒོམ་པས་ནམ་ཞིག་ཅི་མཐོང་ངམ། །

འདི་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་རང་ཉིད་ལ། །
མགོན་འཇམ་དཔལ་བཞུགས་གནས་རི་ཁྲོད་ནས། །
ཤ་ཚ་བའི་སེམས་ཀྱིས་སྨྲས་པ་ཡིན། ། ། །

[78] *bar* BCD; *par* A.
[79] *bslu'am* AB; *bslu 'am* CD.

You turn away after mouthing, "[I] take refuge"
In the Three Precious Jewels, the undistorted refuge.
You, scholar, has a demon entered [your] heart?

You pass the time with activities only of sin
While knowing the damage caused by black karma.
Aren't you one who doesn't regret the time of death of the
old sinner?

You think about acting on a deed which is sullied by a blind mind
While understanding benefit through virtuous action.
Aren't you one in whom, [while] thinking [about it], despair does
not arise?

You have been tormented by all suffering through perpetual time
While not [feeling] tortured on the high peak of samsara.
Aren't you one who still wanders and practices in that place?

You have no thought of wanting to benefit
Sentient beings, [your] mothers, who circle in samsara's three
realms.
Aren't you one who will deceive everyone with the name, "religious
[person]"?

You, into whose heart the demon himself has continually entered,
Are one who wavers in the nine different kinds of remorse and clings
to a sense of self.
When will you ever envision anything through meditation?

This Skal ldan rgya mtsho said to himself
With affectionate thoughts
In the mountain hermitage, the residence of the protector Mañjuśrī.

V-16a, pp. 112-13/ 101

རྗེ་བཙུན་བླ་མའི་ཞབས་ལ་འདུད། །
བདག་སོགས་རྣམས་ལ་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །

རང་དང་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་པའི་སེམས། །
མེད་ཀྱང་སྙིང་གཏམ་འདི་སྐད་སྨྲ། །

སྔོན་བསགས་དགེ་བས་མི་ལུས་ཐོབ། །
རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྟན་དང་མཇལ་དུས་[80]འདི་ར། །
དམ་ཆོས་ཉམས་སུ་མ་བླངས་ན། །
འཆི་ཁར་[81]འགྱོད་དོ་ཤེས་ལྷན་ཆོ། །

མཛེས་ཤིང་འཇམ་པའི་གཟུགས་ཕུང་འདི། །
རྟག་ཏུ་གནས་པར་རེ་ན་ཡང་། །
ཁོང་རུལ་སྡོང་པོ་ཇི་བཞིན་དུ། །
སྐྱུར་དུ་འགྲོའོ་ཤེས་ལྷན་ཆོ། །

ཐབས་དང་གཡོ་སྒྱུ་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས། །
འཕྲུལ་གྱི་ཟས་ནོར་མང་བསྒྲུབས་ཀྱང་། །
འཕོངས་ཕྱིས་[82]པ་ཡི་ས་རྗེ་ལྷེར། །[83]
བསྐྱུར་[84]ཆེ་སྡུག་གོ་ཤེས་ལྷན་ཆོ། །

ལེགས་བཤད་ཐོས་དོན་མ་བསྒོམས་ན། །
འོ་མ་མང་ཡང་མར་མེད་བཞིན། །
གསུང་རབ་ཉན་པའི་དགོས་པ་ནི། །
ཨེ་འདུག་སོམས་དང་ཤེས་ལྷན་ཆོ། །

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[80] *dus* ABC; *ba* D.
[81] *khar* ABD; *bar* C.
[82] *phyis* CD; *byis* AB.
[83] The meter in this line is 1 + 3 + 3. It stands out in contrast to the meter of the song, 2 + 2 + 3, while making a startling reference to Tibetan toilet habits.
[84] *bskyur* CD; *skyur* AB.

V-16a, pp. 112-13/ 101

[I] bow at the feet of the lord, lama.
Please bless me and others.

Although I do not intend to benefit myself or others,
[I] am going to say these words from the heart.

Because of merit accumulated previously, [you] have obtained
bodies.
If in this age of meeting with the teaching of the Victorious One
[You] don't take the holy religion to heart,
[You] will regret it at the point of death, knowledgeable ones.

Although [you] hope to live forever
In this beautiful and soft heap of a body,
It will go swiftly, like a rotten hollow trunk, knowledgeable ones.

Although [you] have realized much incidental food and wealth
Through opportunity and deceit and so on,
Like earth and stone [you] have used to wipe [your] behind,
You will suffer, knowledgeable ones.

If just as though there is lots of milk yet no butter,
[You] hear that which is well-explained and don't contemplate
its meaning,
Think about whether there is a need
To listen to the scriptures, knowledgeable ones.

སྤྱིར་གྱི་དུས་ཀྱི་མི་རྣམས་ནི། །
ད་ལྟའི་དུས་སུ་ཤི་ཟིན་ན། །
རང་རེ་མི་འཆིའི་ངེས་པ་གང་། །
དེ་ལ་སོམས་དང་ཤེས་ལྡན་ཚོ། །

མ་ཐོས་ཐོས་པར་ཧྲོམ་པ་དེས། །
ཡར་ཆེས་ཆེས་པ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ལ། །
མི་ཆོས་ཆོས་སུ་བསྒྱུར་ནས་ནི[85]། །
དུས་ངན་ངན་སེམས་ལྡན་པའི་མི། །
འདུལ་བའི་ཕྱིར་དུ་ཡི་གེར་བཀོད། །

[85] *ni* BCD; *na* A.

If the people of former times
Have now all died,
Think about what truth there can be
In your own hope not to die, knowledgeable ones.

On the twelfth day of the days of the waxing moon,
Having transformed popular religion into [divine] religion
In order to discipline people who have evil minds in an evil age,
The one haughty in learning, [yet] never having studied,
Put this down in writing.

V-20, pp. 117-18/ 105

བླ་མ་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་དེ་བཞུགས་ན་དགའ་བ། །
དབང་ལུང་ཇེས་གནང་གང་འདོད་དེ་ཞུས་ན་སྐྱིད་པ། །
ཞལ་རས་ཟླ་ཟེར་ལྟར་འཛུམ་པ་དེ་མཐོང་ན་སྤྲོ་བ། །
གསུང་རྒྱུན་བདུད་རྩི་ལས་ལྷག་པ་དེ་མྱངས་ན་བདེ་བ། །

ཨ་མདོ་མཐའ་འཁོབ་ཀྱི་ས་ཕྱོགས་འདི་རུ། །
བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཐུབ་བསྟན་གྱི་ཉི་མ་ཤར་བ། །
མགོན་པོ་ཁྱོད་ཉིད་ཀྱི་བཀའ་དྲིན་ཡིན་ཡང་། །
བཀའ་དྲིན་མི་དྲན་ཚོའི་སྙིང་ལ་ཅི་ཞུགས། །

བླ་མ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་ས་འདི་སྤངས་ནས། །
དག་ཞིང་གཙང་མ་རུ་གཤེགས་པའི་དུས་འདིར། །
བློ་རྩེ་ལིངས་ཀྱིས་གཏོད་སའི་བླ་མ། །
ཡང་ཡང་བཙལ་ཀྱང་རྙེད་པར་མ་གྱུར། །

སླར་ཡང་ཁྱོད་སྐུའི་སྣང་བརྙན་དྲན་པའི། །
དད་པའི་གདུང་ཤུགས་དྲག་པོའི་ངང་ནས། །
ཉིན་མཚན་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ། །
ཐུགས་ཇེའི་སྤྱན་ཟུར་རྐྱོངས་[86]ལ་གཟིགས་དང་། །

ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཕུང་པོ་དེ་འདྲ། །
ད་ལྟར་མངའ་བ་ཕར་ལ་ཞོག་དང་། །

ཆ་ཤས་ཙམ་ཡང་ཡོད་པའི་བཤེས་གཉེན། །
ཉིན་སྐར་ལས་ཀྱང་དཀོན་པའི་དུས་འདིར། །
སྤྲོག་གི་ལྷག་མ་གནས་ཀྱང་ཅི་བྱ། །

[86] *rkyongs* BCD; *rkyong* A.

V-20, pp. 117-18/ 105

When the lama Bstan ’dzin blo bzang was living—Oh, joy!
When [I] requested whatever empowerments, textual transmissions and tantric rituals [I wanted]—Oh, happiness!
When [I] saw that smile, like the light of the moon, [on your] face—Oh, delight!
When [I] experienced that flow of speech greater than nectar—Oh, what peace!

Although the rising sun of the Mighty One’s teachings of explanation and practice
In this barbarous area, Amdo,
Is the kindness of only you, protector,
What enters the heart of those who do not recall [your] kindness?

In this time, lama, of your having renounced this place and
Having gone to a pure, stainless [Buddha] field,
Although [I] have searched again and again for a lama [I can] focus on with the net of a single-pointed mind,
[I] have not found [another].

With respect to this manner of beseeching [you] day and night
In [my] state of fiercely strong longing for faith
In [my] recollection once more of an image of your body,
Please extend [your] compassionate glance and look [at me].

[I must] now put away [the hope of trying] to have qualities
Like those you have accumulated!

In this time in which a spiritual friend who has even a mere portion [of what you have]
Is even more precious than the sun and the stars,
Although [I] live for the remainder of [my] life, what will [I] do?

ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་རི་ཐག་ཆད་ཅིང་། །
ང་བཟང་སྙམ་པའི་ཁུར་གྱིས་ནོན་ནོ། །

དུས་འདིར་ཉིན་མཚན་ཁོར་ཡུག་གཟིགས་ཤིག །

ཅེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་གྱིས་བྲིས་པའོ། ། ། །

[My] hopes in the area of religion have been cut off and
I am overcome by the burden of pretending to be good.[87]

At this time, please look [at me] continually, day and night.

This also was written by Skal ldan.

[87] I have read *bzang nyams* instead of *bzang snyam*.

V-21, pp. 118/ 106

དགུ་ཆུ་སྦྲོན་མོ་དེ་དང་གཅིག །
དེ་ལ་འཁོར་བའི་ཉ་མོ་[88]གཉིས། །
གནས་སྐབས་དུས་ཚོད་ཀྱི་འཁྱིལ་བ། །
ཡུད་ཙམ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གདའ་བ། །
དེ་བཞིན་སྐལ་ལྡན་ང་དང་གཅིག །
དེ་ལ་འཁོར་བའི་གྲྭ་ཚོགས་དང་གཉིས། །
གནས་སྐབས་དུས་ཚོད་ཀྱི་འཁྱིལ་བ། །
ཡུད་ཙམ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གདའ་བས། །
དམ་ཆོས་ཅི་ནུས་གྱིས་ཤིག །   ། །

[88] *dang*, part of the pattern, is omitted in ABCD, in order to preserve the meter.

V-21, pp. 118/ 106

The blue Dgu chu[89]—one;
The fish that go around in [the river]—two.
An interrelationship between times and circumstances
Comes about suddenly.

Likewise, I, the fortunate one—one;
The disciples who go around that [one]—two.
Since an interrelationship between times and circumstances
Comes about suddenly,
Practice the holy religion by whatever means [you] have.

[89] The Dgu chu is the river that flows through Reb gong, near Rong bo monastery.

VI-7, p. 130/ 115-16

ན་མོ་གུ་རུ། །

གདི་ཤུག་ཁོ་ཐོ་ཙོ་ཛེ་ཆེ་རེད། །

ཤེས་རབ་ཁྱོད་ཉལ་ནས་འདུག་ཡོད་དམ། །
འདོད་ཆགས་ཁོ་སྐུ་སྒྲོད་ཛེ་རྫིང་རེད། །

མི་སྡུག་ཁྱོད་གང་གི་འདམ་དུ་འཁྱིལ། །
ཞེ་སྡང་ཁོ་སྐུ་བརྫིད་ཛེ་ཆེ་རེད། །

བྱམས་པ་ཁྱོད་ས་ཆ་གང་དུ་བྲོས། །
ང་རྒྱལ་ཁོ་ངར་སྐད་ཛེ་ཆེ་རེད། །

ཁེངས་སྐྱུངས་ཁྱོད་རྣ་བ་འོན་ནམ་ཅི། །
ཕྲག་དོག་ཁོ་ཟུག་ཛུ་ཛེ་རགས་རེད། །

དག་སྣང་ཁྱོད་གར་སོང་རྩར་མ་ཚོད། །
ལོག་ལྟ་ཁོ་བསླུ་བྲིད་ཛེ་མཁས་རེད། །

དད་གུས་ཁྱོད་རྨང་ནས་ཡལ་ལམ་ཅི། །
འདད་[90] ཟས་ཁོ་ཁ་ལ་ཛེ་ཞིམ་རེད། །

དགེ་སྦྱོར་ཁྱོད་སྟོང་ཡལ་འགྲོ་ལ་ཁད། །
ཉེས་ལྟུང་ཁོ་ཆར་བཞིན་ཛེ་འབབ་རེད། །

[90] *'dad* C; *dad* ABD.

VI-7, pp. 130/ 115-16

I prostrate myself before the guru.

As for stupidity etc., his senseless jokes are ever increasing.

Primordial wisdom, are you progressing by dwelling out
there, sleeping?
As for desire, his actions are ever more coarse.

Ugliness, which swamp did you fall into?
As for anger, his brightness is ever increasing.

Loving kindness, where have you fled?
As for pride, his roaring is ever louder.

The relinquishing of pride, are your ears deaf or what?
As for envy, his complaints are ever more gross.

Pure knowledge, wherever you went, [you] did not cut to the root.
As for false view, he is ever more skilled in deception.

Faith and respect, are you vanishing from the foundation or what?
As for eating funeral repasts, he is ever more delicious to the mouth.

Good behavior, you are prevailed upon to go into emptiness.
As for sin, he is falling ever more like rain.

བསླབ་སྦྱོམ་ཁྱོད་ཨེ་ཡོད་ངས་མ་ཤེས། །
སེར་སྣ་ཁོ་མདུད་པ་ཇེ་དམ་རེད། །

སྦྱིན་པ་ཁྱོད་ལག་པ་འཁུམས་སམ་ཅག །

ཅེས་པ་འདི་ནི་རོང་སྐྱེས་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་སྤྱང་གཉེན་འབྱེད་ཕྱིར་དབྱེན་ཚིག་གི་
རྩོལ་དུ་བྲིས་པའོ། ། ། །

Vows, where are you? I don’t know.
As for avarice, he is a tighter and tighter knot.

Patron, did your hand shrink or break?

Rong bo born Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote this in order to distinguish between renunciation and attachment, in the manner of words of dissension.

VII-2, pp. 137-39/ 122-23

མཆོག་སྐུ་གསུམ་གོ་འཕང་བརྙེས་ན་ཡང་། །
མི་བདག་ངོར་ཐ་མལ་ཚུལ་འཛིན་པ། །
དྲིན་འཁོར་མེད་སྤྲེ་པ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྗེ། །
ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བའི་སྤྱན་གྱིས་རྒྱང་[91]ནས་གཟིགས། །

གནས་དབེན་པ་སྙེན་འདོད་རི་ཁྲོད་པ། །
སེམས་སྐྱོ་བ་སྐྱིད་ལ་གླུ་འདི་ཉོན། །
མི་རང་ལ་རང་གྲོས་མ་བཏབ་ན། །
གྲོགས་གཞན་གྱིས་ཆོས་ལ་བསྐུལ་བ་དཀོན། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་རི་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
རི་ན་བྱུན་ཅན་གྱི་སྐྱབས་ཤིད་ན། །
གཡའ་རྫ་བྲག་གི་ཕུག་པ་རང་བྱུང་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་འཕྲལ་ཕུགས་སྐྱིད། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་ནགས་[92]ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
ནགས་སྡོ་ལྗང་རྒྱས་པའི་ཁྲོད་ཅིག་[93]ན། །
ཤིང་ལྗོན་པའི་[94]ལོ་མའི་བསིལ་ཁང་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་དགའ་སྤྲོ་འཕེལ། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་གངས་[95]ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
གངས་དཀར་པོའི་རི་ཡི་མགུལ་ཞིག་ན། །
རང་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད་སའི་སྒྲུབ་ཕུག་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་དགེ་སྦྱོར་འཕེལ། །

[91] *rgyang* BCD; *rgyangs* A.
[92] *nags* ABC; *gangs* D.
[93] *cig* BCD; *zhig* A.
[94] *pa'i* CD; *pa* AB.
[95] *gangs* ABC; *nags* D.

VII-2, pp. 137-39/ 122-23

Although [you] have obtained the rank of the most excellent
three bodies,
Sde pa Chos kyi rje, whose kindness cannot be repaid,
Please look upon me who cling to self tenaciously,
From afar with eyes of compassion!

You want to rely on a solitary place, mountain hermit!
When [you] generate sadness, listen to this song.
If [I] don't give myself advice,
Other friends inciting me to religion would be rare.

If you delight in solitary mountains,
Under a strong small overhang in the mountain,
There is a slate clay rock cave that has spontaneously arisen.
If [you] depend on a place like that, in the present moment and time
to come [you] will be happy.

If you delight in solitary forests,
Amidst a luscious green forest
There is a cool house of the trees' leaves.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [your] joy will increase.

If you delight in solitary snow lands,
On the shoulder of a white snowy mountain
There is a cave for practices in which to stay by yourself.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [your] merit will increase.

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་སྤྱང་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
སྤྱང་མི་རྟོག་བཀྲ་བའི་ལྗོངས་ཞིག་ན། །
རྩྭ་ལྗང་སྔོན་སྤྱིལ་ཆུང་ཉམས་དགའ་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་ངང་གིས་བདེ། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་བྲག་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
བྲག་རྩོད་ཆང་ཅན་གྱི་ངོས་ཞིག་ན། །
སྐྱིབས་རབ་མཛེས་ཕུག་པ་རང་གྲུབ་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་རིག་པ་དྭངས། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་རྫ་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
རྫ་ཁྲ་མོ་སྤུངས་[96] པའི་ཁྲོད་ཅིག་[97] ན། །
འཕྲུལ་རྣམ་གཡེང་མེད་པའི་ཕུག་པ་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་ཅི་བསམ་འགྲུབ། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་གཡའ་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
གཡའ་སྙོ་ལེབ་བརྩེགས་འདྲའི་འོག་ཞེད་ན། །
སྤྱང་གཉོམ་ཆུང་སྤྱོད་སའི་ཇོ་ཁང་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་ངང་གིས་དལ།

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་གྲོགས་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
གྲོགས་བྱ་དང་རི་དྭགས་བལྟས་པའི་ཚེ། །
འཕྲུལ་རྣར་སྙན་ཡིད་དགའི་ལྟད་མོ་ཡོད། །
གྲོགས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་ཉམས་རེ་དགའ། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་མཚོ་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
མཚོ་ཐ་རླབས་ཅན་གྱི་ངོགས་ཞེད་ན། །
ཆུ་ལྷུང་ལྷུང་སྐད་སྙན་འབྱིན་པ་ཡོད། །
གནས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་རྒྱུན་མར་སྤྲོ། །

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96 *spungs* BCD; *sprungs* A.
97 *cig* BCD; *zhig* A.

If you delight in solitary meadows,
In a large valley of beautiful wildflowers
There is a delightful small hut of green grass.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [you] will spontaneously be
at peace.

If you delight in solitary caves,
On the side of a rock with a vulture's nest
There is a beautiful shelter—a natural cave.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [your] knowledge will be pure.

If you delight in a solitary place of clay,
On a clay [mountain] amidst a nest of hawks
There is at the present moment a solid cave.
If [you] depend on a place like that, whatever [you] think will be
accomplished.

If you delight in a solitary place of slate,
Under piled up flat sheets of slate like doors
There is a stone house, a humble beggar's dwelling place.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [you] will spontaneously be
at ease.

If you delight in friends in a solitary place,
When [you] have seen [your] friends, birds and wild animals,
Right away there is a joyful, sweet-sounding [musical] performance
in [your] ears.
If [you] depend on friends like that, [you] will be happy.

If you delight in solitary lakes,
On the shore of a lake with waves
There is a pleasant sound of murmuring water.
If [you] depend on a place like that, [you] will always be happy.

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་ཟས་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
ཟས་རང་གྲུབ་ཤིང་ཐོག་ཟྭ་ཚོད་ལ། །
བཅུད་མྱང་ན་ཞིམ་པའི་བྲོ་བ་ཡོད། །
ཟས་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་ངོ་མཚར་ཆེ། །

ཁྱེད་དབེན་པའི་གླུ་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་ན། །
གླུ་རང་གི་རྒྱུད་ལ་ཕན་པ་ལ། །
དུས་གདན་དུ་དགོས་པའི་བག་ཆགས་ཡོད། །
གླུ་དེ་འདྲ་བསྟེན་ན་ངོ་མཚརཆེ། །

གདམ་འདི་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་དགེ་བ་དེས། །
རང་འདོད་པའི་དོན་ཀུན་འགྲུབ་པ་དང་། །
གཞན་བཤད་སྒྲུབ་དཔལ་ལ་འགོད་པ་ལ། །
འགྲན་ཟླ་བྲལ་གོ་འཕང་མྱུར་ཐོབ་ཤོག །

ཅེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་དབེན་པ་ལ་ཡིད་སྤྲོ་བའི་ཤུགས་ཀྱིས་སྨྲས་པའོ།
། ། །

If you delight in the food of solitary places,
When [you] will taste the juice in wild-growing foods—fruits and vegetables—
There is a delicious flavor.
If [you] depend on food like that, [your] wonder will be great.

If you delight in songs in solitary places,
There is an inclination to want to benefit
The character of song, itself.
If [you] depend on songs like that, [your] wonder will be great.

May the merit which has arisen from this discourse
Bring about all benefits which I myself desire and
Serve as a foundation for glorious explanations and practices of others, and
May [we] quickly obtain the incomparable level [of Buddhahood].

This also was spoken by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, through the power of joy in a solitary place.

VII-6, pp. 143-44/ 127-28

རྗེ་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་། །
སྤྱིར་སེམས་ཅན་ཡོངས་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེས་གཟིགས། །

སྒོས་[98] རོང་བོའི་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ང་། །
ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བས་མ་དོར་ཡུན་རིང་སྐྱོངས། །

རི་ཡིད་འོང་ཉམས་དགའ་མཐོང་བའི་ཚེ། །
བདག་སྐལ་ལྡན་དབེན་པའི་ནགས་ཚལ་དྲན། །

བྱ་སྣ་ཚོགས་སྐད་སྙན་སྒྲོགས་ཐོས་ཚེ། །
བདག་དབེན་པའི་གནས་ལ་ཡིད་རབ་གཡོས། །

ཤིང་སྣ་ཚོགས་སྔོ་ལྗང་འདབ་རྒྱས་ཚེ། །
བདག་དབེན་པའི་ནགས་ཚལ་དྲན་ཞིང་སྐྱོ། །

ཛ་ཁྲ་ཁྲ་ལྡེམ་པ་མཐོང་བའི་ཚེ། །
བདག་དེ་རུ་འགྲོ་སྙམ་འདུན་པ་ཤར། །

གྲོགས་བཟང་པོ་འགའ་རེ་རི་ན་བཞུགས། །

རི་ཤིན་ཏུ་དབེན་པའི་དགའ་ཚལ་ན། །
རང་གཅིག་པུར་དྲང་སྲོང་སྤྱོད་ལ་གནས། །

འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་བསམས་ཤིང་སྨོན་པ་སྐྱེས། །

བདག་ཁྲིད་འབོགས་[99] བླ་མ་ཡིན་ན་ཡང་། །
དུས་ད་དུང་སེམས་དང་ཁྲིད་མ་འདྲེས། །

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98 *sgos* CD; *dgos* AB.
99 *'bogs* CD; *'bog* AB.

VII-6, pp. 143-44/ 127-28

Lord Bstan ’dzin blo bzang, Rdo rje ’chang,
Please look in general upon all sentient beings with compassion.

In particular, please protect me, Skal ldan rgya mtsho of Rong bo,
For a long time with love, with no rejection.

Whenever [I] saw a delightful and pleasing mountain,
I, Skal ldan, recalled a solitary grove.

Whenever [I] heard the pleasing voices of birds and so on,
[It] moved my mind to a solitary place.

Whenever the green leaves on various trees flourished,
I recalled a solitary grove and felt delight.

Whenever I saw a twisting, colorful clay [bluff],
I thought I would go there and an earnest desire would arise in
[my mind].

Some good friends [who live like me] live in the mountains.

In a very solitary grove on a mountain,
I myself, a seer,[100] practice and live alone.

[I] have thought and thought about this, and desire has come about.

Although I am a lama who gives instruction,
Up to now [my] mind has not been integrated with the instructions.

[100] *Drang srong* brings to mind ancient Vedic sages who live practically forever thanks to their Ayurvedic herbal concoctions.

ད་དབེན་པའི་དགའ་ཚལ་ཉམས་དགའ་བར། །
སེམས་ཁྲིད་དང་མཇལ་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །

ཞེས་[101] པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་ལྷུང་ཤར་གྱི་ཆོས་གྲྭར་བྲིས་པའོ། །   ། །

[101] *zhes* CD; *ces* AB.

Now, in a pleasing solitary grove,
Please give blessings for the meeting of [my] mind with the
teachings.

This also was written by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, in the religious seminary of Lcang shar.

VII-7, pp. 143-44/ 128

རིབ་གོང་སྟོད་ཀྱི་ཇག་པ། །
འདི་ཕྱི་བློ་ཡིས་དོར་ཏེ། །
ཁྲིལ་མེད་བྱ་བ་རྒྱང་གིས། །
རང་གི་ལྟོ་གོས་སྒྲུབ་པོ། །

རིབ་གོང་སྨད་ཀྱི་སྐལ་ལྡན། །
རི་ཁྲོད་བློ་ཡིས་དོར་ནས། །
རྒྱལ་འཚོས་གསོ་སྒྲུ་རྒྱང་གིས། །
འདད་[102] ཟས་གཤིན་ཟས་སྤྱོད་དོ། །

རིབ་གོང་སྟོད་ཀྱི་ཇག་པ། །
བསམ་བློ་ཙུང་ཟད་ཐོངས་ལ། །
གཏན་དུ་བཟང་ངན་སེམས་དང་། །
རང་ལ་ངེས་པར་དགའོ། །

རིབ་གོང་སྨད་ཀྱི་སྐལ་ལྡན། །
རི་ཁྲོད་ངེས་པར་འགྲིམས་ལ། །
དམ་ཆོས་གང་ནུས་གྱིས་དང་། །
རང་ལ་ངེས་པར་དགའོ། །

རིབ་གོང་སྟོད་ཀྱི་ཇག་པ། །
རིབ་གོང་སྨད་ཀྱི་སྐལ་ལྡན། །
ཕྱི་ཡི་རྣམ་འགྱུར་མ་གཏོགས། །
ནང་གི་བསམ་ཚུལ་མཐུན་ནོ། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་བྲིས་པའོ། ། ། །

[102] *'dad* C; *dad* ABD.

VII-7, pp. 143-44/ 128

As for the robber in upper Reb gong
Having rejected this and later [lives],
Through simply shameless deeds
You earn your own food and clothes.

As for Skal ldan of lower Reb gong,
Having rejected a mountain hermitage,
Through simple deceptive “religious acts”
[You] collect funeral repasts.

As for the robber in upper Reb gong,
Abandon small thoughts and
Think always about what is good and what is bad.
[You] will certainly rejoice within yourself.

As for Skal ldan of lower Reb gong,
Go with certainty to a mountain hermitage and
Perform the holy religion as much as possible.
You will certainly rejoice within yourself.

As for the robber in upper Reb gong,
As for Skal ldan in lower Reb gong,
Don’t tear at [your] outer behavior.
[It] agrees with [your] inner thoughts.

This also was written by Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

VII-10a, pp. 147-49/ 131

རིགས་ཁྱབ་བདག་རྒྱལ་བ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་། །
ཕྱི་དྭར་སྒྲིག་གར་གྱིས་རྣམ་རོལ་བ། །
མི་ཁོ་བོའི་བླ་མ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན། །
ཕ་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་ཞབས་ལ་འདུད། །

ངས་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་བླ་མ་བསྟེན། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་གྲོགས་དང་ཡོན་བདག་བསྟེན། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་ཡི་སྨུག་གཉིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

ངས་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་ཐོས་བསམ་བྱས། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་གྲོང་ཆོག་རྐྱང་པར་ཡིངས། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་ཡི་སྨུག་གཉིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

ངས་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་གྲྭ་ས་འགྲིམས། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་ཁྱིམ་པའི་གྲོང་ཡུལ་འགྲིམས། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་ཡི་སྨུག་གཉིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

ང་གཞོན་དུས་གཅིག་པུར་སྡོད་ལ་དགའ། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་ཀུན་དང་མཐུན་འཛུག་བྱེད། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་ཡི་སྨུག་གཉིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

VII-10a, pp. 147-49/ 131

I bow at the feet of my lama, the omniscient one,
My father Bstan ’dzin blo bzang,
The one who enchants with the dance of an outer maroon [robe],
[Of] the lineage [of] the Buddha, the Victorious One, Rdo rje ’chang.

When I was young, I relied on a lama.
Now that [I] am old, I have been relying on friends and patrons.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I’m not staying [here]. [I]’m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] listened to and contemplated [religion].
Now that [I] am old, [I] perform village rites for a living [and I] move to and fro on foot.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I’m not staying [here]. [I]’m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] went where monks assembled.
Now that [I] am old, [I] have been strolling around [my] home village.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I’m not staying [here]. [I]’m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] liked to stay alone.
Now that [I] am old, [I] conform with everyone.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I’m not staying [here]. [I]’m going to a solitary retreat.

ང་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་སྐྱོ་ཤས་ཆེ། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་ཆེ་འདིར་ཤི་སྤར་[103] འཐམས། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་ཡི་མུག་གདིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

ངས་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་ཁྲིམས་གཙང་བསྲུངས[104]། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་བག་མེད་ཀུ་ཡངས་སྤྱོད། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་ཡི་མུག་གདིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

ངས་གཞོན་ནུའི་དུས་ན་དམ་ཆོས་བྱེད། །
ད་རྒས་ཆེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་བྱ་བ་བྱེད། །
འདི་བསམས་ཤིང་ཡི་མུག་གདིང་ནས་སྐྱེས། །
ད་ཁོ་བོ་མི་སྡོད་དབེན་པར་འགྲོ །

གནས་ཡིད་འོང་ཉམས་དགའི་རི་ཁྲོད་དུ། །
ཆོས་ཟབ་མོ་རྒྱལ་བཞིན་སྒྲུབ་ཏུ་འགྲོ །
མི་ཁོ་བོའི་རྗེས་འཇུག་བུ་སློབ་རྣམས། །
མི་ང་བཞིན་བྱེད་ན་ང་ཕྱིར་འབྲོངས། །

གདམ་འདི་ནི་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཡིས། །
མི་རང་གི་སྤྱོད་རྒྱལ་དྲན་པ་ལས། །
གནས་ཐོས་བསམ་གླིང་དུ་ཐོགས་མེད་སླུས། །

དགེ་གང་བསགས་སངས་རྒྱས་འཐོབ་[105] ཕྱིར་བསྔོ། །

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[103] *spar* CD; *sbar* AB.
[104] *bsrungs* CD; *srung* AB.
[105] *'thob* CD; *thob* AB.

When I was young, [my] sadness was great.
Now that [I] am old, this life has been seized in the grasping claw
of death.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] observed the rules with purity.
Now that [I] am old, [I] act freely without shame.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

When I was young, [I] performed[106] the holy religion.
Now that [I] am old, [I] do worldly deeds.
[I] thought about this and despair has arisen from [my] depths.
Now I'm not staying [here]. [I]'m going to a solitary retreat.

[I] am going to practice in accordance with the deep religion.
In a pleasing, delightful mountain hermitage.
When [you] disciples who come behind me do as I do,
Walk in my footsteps!

Skal ldan rgya mtsho spoke these words
Without restraint at the place Thos bsam gling,
From recollecting his own way of practicing [religion].

[I] dedicate whatever merit has been accumulated
For the sake of obtaining Buddhahood.

[106] I have read *byas* for *byed*.

VII-11, pp. 152-53/ 135-36

ཛེ་བླ་མ་རྣམས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །
ལྷ་དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི། །
མི་ང་དང་དབེན་པའི་དགའ་ཚལ་གཉིས། །
ལྷན་གཅིག་ཏུ་གནས་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །

ཡུལ་རིབ་གོང་སྲུང་[107]བའི་མཐུ་རྩལ་ཅན། །
གཉན་ཆེན་པོ་སེ་ཀ་བྱ་ཁྱུང་གི །
གཡས་ཛ་རྒྱུད་དར་དཀར་འཕྱར་འདྲའི་འདབས། །
ས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་གཡང་ཆགས་སྤང་ལུག་བྲག །
ཡར་སྙིང་ན་ནམ་མཁའ་བླ་རེ[108]བྲིས། །

ལོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤང་དང་ཤུག་པས་བརྒྱན། །
མདུན་བྲག་རི་རིན་ཆེན་སྤུངས་འདྲས་སྤྲས། །
ངོགས་[109]ཀུན་ནས་ཛ་ཆབ་བསིལ་[110]མ་འབབ། །
རྒྱབ་སྤང་རིའི་རྩེ་མོ་མཁའ་ལ་རེག །
ཕྱོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་རི་ཕྲན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་བསྐོར། །
མདའ་ཆུ་བྲག་འཐབ་པས་སྒྲོ་སྲུང་[111]བྱེད། །
དབྱིབས་ལྷ་ཡི་ཇ་ཆེན་ལྷ་བུར་བྲིམ། །
བྱ་གོང་མོས་དབྱངས་སྙན་ཀུར་ཀུར་ལེན། །
བྱིའུ་འཛོལ་མོས་སྐད་རིགས་སྣ་ཚོགས་སྒྲུར། །
ཁང་དྲུག་ལྡན་བུང་བས་དིར་དིར་ཟེར། །
ལུས་རབ་མཛེས་རི་དྭགས་བག་ཕེབས་རྒྱུ། །
ཤིང་སྣ་ཚོགས་ལྡེམ་ལྡེམ་གར་གྱིས་རོལ། །

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[107] *srung* B; *bsrung* ACD.
[108] *re* ABD; bres C.
[109] *ngogs* CD; *dngos* AB.
[110] *bsil* CD; *sil* AB.
[111] *srung* BCD; *bsrung* A.

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[I] prostrate myself before lord lamas.
[I] take refuge in the Three Precious Jewels.
Please bless [me], that both I, a human, and [this] solitary
delightful grove
May exist together.

Above the auspicious land of perfect essence, [its] meadows,
sheep and rocks,
The right clay range of the great, precipitous Se ku bya khyung
Which possesses the power to protect the area of Reb gong [and]
Whose sides are like hoisted white flags,
The canopy of the sky stretched out.

All sides have been decorated with meadows and juniper trees.
In front, the rock mountain has been adorned as if with heaps
of jewels.
From all the slopes, cool water falls from within the clay rocks.
Behind, peaks of grass-covered mountains touch the sky.
In all directions, [it] is surrounded with small mountains.
Since waters in the lower parts of the valleys battle with rocks, [they]
guard the entrances [to the mountain].
Shapes wind together like a big divine drum.
Grouses sing *kyur kyur* mellifluously.
Small songbirds trade various types of calls back and forth.
Six-legged bees say “buzz buzz.”
Wild animals with very beautiful bodies run happily.
Various trees enchant with supple dances.

ཟླ་སློག་སོགས་ཚོད་མས་ཁོར་ཡུག་གང་། །
གཞི་ཉེའུ་གསིང་[112] མེ་ཏོག་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་བརྒྱན། །
ཁ་ལྷོར་[113] ལྷ་དགུན་དུས་ཉི་འོད་འཁྱིལ། །
དབྱར་སོས་དུས་བསིལ་ཞིང་རིག་པ་དྭངས། །
དུས་ཀུན་ཏུ་[114] སྒྲོ་ཞིང་བག་ཕེབས་སྐྱིད། །
གྲོང་ཐག་རིང་འར་འུར་མེད་ཅིང་འགོལ། །

གནས་དེ་ལྟར་ངོ་མཚར་ལྡན་པ་ན། །
མདོག་རབ་མཛེས་རང་བྱུང་བྲག་ཕུག་ཡོད། །

ཕུག་དེ་ན་སྐལ་ལྡན་རས་པ་ང་། །
ལུས་ངུར་སྨྲིག་གོས་ཀྱིས་གཡོགས་པས་བདེ། །
ངག་གླུ་དབྱངས་ལྷང་ལྷང་གླངས་པས་བདེ། །
སེམས་སྡུག་བསྔལ་མེད་པར་གནས་པས་བདེ། །
ཉིན་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་ཅི་ནུས་བགྱིས་པས་བདེ། །
མཚན་གློ་ཕབ་བདེ་བར་ཉལ་བས་བདེ། །
དཔོན་དབང་ཆེས་གཉའ་གནོན་མེད་པས་བདེ། །
འཁོར་ཉེ་འབྲེལ་སྐྱོང་དགོས་མེད་པས་བདེ། །
གྲོགས་བྲ་[115] ཅིག་གཉིས་ལ་བྱུས་པས་བདེ། །
དཔེ་རྣམ་ཐར་མང་དུ་བལྟས་པས་བདེ། །
དུས་རེས་འགའ་རི་རྩེར་འཁྱམས་པས་བདེ། །
སྐབས་ཕལ་ཆེར་མལ་སར་བསྡད་པས་བདེ། །
འཕྲལ་ཁ་ཟོམ་གྲོད་པ་འགྲངས་པས་བདེ། །
ཕུགས་བློ་རྩེ་ཆོས་ལ་གཏད་པས་བདེ། །
སྡོམ་དམ་ཚིག་ཅི་ནུས་བསྲུངས་པས་བདེ། །

[112] *gsing* BCD; *bsing* A.
[113] *lhor* ACD; *lho* B.
[114] *tu* BCD; *du* A.
[115] *bra* BCD; *pra* A.

The surroundings are full of vegetables, such as nettles and leeks.
The alpine pastures have been decorated with bunches of flowers.
Looking on the south face in winter, [I see] light rays converge.
In the spring and summer, [it] is cool, and [my] knowledge is clear.
At all times, [I] am joyful and relaxed.
There is no clamor of the distant towns, and [my life] is easy thanks to its absence.

In such a wondrous place as that,
There is a rock cave with very beautiful colors, that has naturally come to be.

In that cave, because I, Skal ldan ras pa,
Have covered [my] body with maroon, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have sung a sonorous song, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have lived without mental suffering, [I] am happy.
Because by day [I] have performed whatever religious practices possible, [I] am happy.
Because in the night [I] have lain happily on [my] side, [I] am happy.
Because [I]'ve not been put in a stocks by a greatly powerful lord, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have no need for the care of people around me or kinsmen, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have made friends with both marmots and mice, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have read many stories of spiritual realization, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have run about on mountain peaks several times, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have stayed most of the time at the site of [my] bed, [I] am happy.
Because daily [I] am free from hunger and thirst, [I] am happy.
Because for a long time [I] have focused single-mindedly on religion, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have preserved as much as possible [my] vows [and] promises, [I] am happy.

ཆོས་ཐུན་དྲུག་རྣལ་འབྱོར་བསྒྲགས་པས་བདེ། །
སྦྱིན་ཤ་ཁྲིར་ཁྲག་ཁྲིར་བྱས་པས་བདེ། །

གླུ་བདེ་བ་བཅུ་དྲུག་འདི་བླངས་པས། །
སྤྱིར་ཁམས་གསུམ་སེམས་ཅན་བདེ་བ་དང་། །
སྒོས་ཆོས་མཛད་སྐྱེས་བུ་ཀུན་བདེར་ཤོག །

ཅེས་པ་རོང་པོའི་[116] སྐལ་ལྡན་རས་པས་སྦྱར་བའོ། ། ། །

[116] *bo'i* BCD; *po'i* A.

Because [I] have read the *Chos thun drug rnal 'byor*, [I] am happy.
Because [I] have made gifts, holding back neither flesh nor blood, [I] am happy.

Because [I] sang this song of the sixteen happinesses,
In general may sentient beings of the three realms
And in particular all humans who practice religion be happy.

Skal ldan of Rong bo composed what is cited above.

VII-17, pp. 160-61/ 142-43

རྫོན་པ་ཁྲི་ཁྲིད་ནི་སླེབས་[117]བྱུང་། །
ཤ་བ་སྨུག་པོ་ནི་འབྲོས་སོ། །
རྫ་རི་མཐོན་པོ་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

ང་རྒྱལ་སེང་གེ་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
ཡོན་དན་རི་བོང་ནི་འབྲོས་སོ། །
ཁེངས་[118]སྐྱུངས་[119]བྲག་ཤུག་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

བྱ་ཁྲ་ཐིག་ཅན་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
འདབ་ཆགས་བྱིའུ་ནི་འབྲོས་སོ། །
ཤིང་ནགས་འཐུག་པོ་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

དཀོར་ཟས་མེ་ལྕེ་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
དགེ་སེམས་རྩྭ་ཤིང་ནི་འབྲོས་སོ། །
སྒྲིབ་སྒྲོང་འཁྲུག་པ་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

བྱི་ལ་གཡོ་ཅན་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
ཀུན་མོ་བྱི་བ་ནི་འབྲོས་སོ། །
བུག་པ་ཤུག་རིང་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

ལོག་རྟོག་ཁ་བ་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
དད་པ་གཅེར་བུ་ནི་འབྲོས་སོ། །
ལེགས་བཤད་རྩྭ་ནང་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

[117] *slebs* CD; *sleb* AB. I have chosen *slebs*, the perfective of *sleb*, to coincide with the perfective tense of the auxiliary that follows it. This recurring pair of spelling variants between the editions occurs in the first line of each stanza throughout the poem. I will mark the existence of variants only in this stanza.

[118] *khengs* BCD; *kheng* A.

[119] *skyungs* ACD; *bskyungs* B.

VII-17, pp. 160-61/ 142-43

The hunter, leading a dog, arrived.
The place of refuge for the dark bay stag,
A high clay mountain, was good.

The proud lion arrived.
The place of refuge for the rabbit of qualities,
A cave for leaving arrogance behind, was good.

The sinful bird of prey arrived.
The place of refuge for the little bird,
A deep forest, was good.

The flame of the fire of wealth and food arrived.
The place of refuge for the grass and trees of virtuous mind,
A glacier for cleansing obscurations, was good.

The deceitful cat arrived.
The place of refuge for the mouse-thief,
The innermost part of a hole, was good.

The snow of false knowledge arrived.
The place of refuge for naked faith,
Within the grass of eloquent speech, was good.

ཉ་བ་རྒྱ་ཐོགས་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
ཉ་མོ་སྒོང་[120]སྐྱེས་ནི་འབྲོས་ས། །
གཏིང་ཟབ་ཆུ་ཆེན་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

སྐྲ་དཀར་སོ་བ་ནི་སླེབས་བྱུང་། །
སྤྲང་རྒན་དབང་ཆུང་ནི་འབྲོས་ས། །
རི་ཁྲོད་དབེན་པ་ནི་བཟང་ངོ། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་སྦྱར་བའོ། ། ། །

[120] *sgong* CD; *rgod* A; *rgong* B.

The net of a fisherman arrived.
The place of refuge for the spawning of the fish,
Deep, vast water, was good.

The white haired spy arrived.
The place of refuge for the weak old beggar,
A solitary mountain retreat, was good.

This also was composed by Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

VII-19, pp. 162-63/ 144-45

རྗེ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀུན་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་པའི། །
མགོན་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དེ། །
དུས་ལན་རེ་དྲན་ཡང་དད་པ་གཡོ། །
ཕ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་མ་ཆུང་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས། །

ཀླུ་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་གནས་པའི་མཚོ། །
མཚོ་སྔོན་པོ་ཁྲི་ཤོར་[121]རྒྱལ་མོ་དེ། །
དུས་དགུན་གསུམ་དར་དཀར་ན་[122]བཟའ་གསོལ། །

དར་དཀར་པོའི་ལམ་དེ་ལྷ་ཡི་ལམ། །
ལྷ་མ་ཧཱ་དེ་བའང་དེ་ན་བཞུགས། །

དཔལ་ཨོ་རྒྱན་པདྨས་བྱིན་གྱིས་བརླབས། །
སྔོན་གྲུབ་ཐོབ་མང་པོ་དེ་རུ་བཞུགས། །
ཁོང་འབྱོར་ལྡན་ཡོན་བདག་དེ་ན་མང་། །

ཆུ་ཁྲི་འབུམ་འདུས་པ་མཚོ་དེ་ཡིན། །
བྱ་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་སྐད་སྙན་མཚོ་དེར་སྒྲོག[123]། །
རླབས་ཆུ་གཉེར་གྱི་རི་མོ་ཡང་མཚོ་དེར་གཡོ། །
འཕྲུལ་ཉམས་དགའི་གཟིགས་མོ་དེ་རུ་ཡོད། །
ཉ་གསེར་མིག་གིས་རྩེ་འཛོ་དེ་རུ་སྟོན། །
གྲོགས་རི་དྭགས་ཚོ་བག་ཕེབས་དེ་རུ་རྩེ། །

ལྷ་དཀར་ཕྱོགས་ལ་དགའ་བ་དེ་ན་མང་། །
ཆོས་ནུས་ན་ཆོས་ལྡན་གྱི་འཕྲིན་ལས་བསྒྲུབ[124]། །

[121] *shor*, against all readings of ABCD, which have *gshog* AB, *shog* CD, at the advice of the Rong bo scholar, Blo bzang chos grags.
[122] *na* BCD; *nab* A.
[123] *sgrog* AB; *sgrogs* CD.
[124] *bsgrub* ACD; *sgrub* B.

VII-19, pp. 162-63/ 144-45

Although time after time [I] remembered Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan,[125]
The lord, protector who is indivisible from all the lord Buddhas,
[It still] moves [my] faith.
Bless [me] father, with no small amount of compassion.

The lake in which the Naga Bodhisattva lives,
Mtsho sngon po, Khri shor rgyal mo,
Put on the white silk clothes [of] the three winter months of the year.

[On] that path of white silk, the path of deities,
The deity Ma hā de ba also dwells.

Glorious O rgyan Padma blessed [it].
Previously, many siddhas dwelt there.
There were many wealthy patrons there.

It is the lake which has gathered one billion waters.
Pleasing voices of various birds call out at the lake.
Patterns of waves also move on that lake.
Delightful shows suddenly [appear there].
Fish there display beautiful games.
Friendly wild animals play there happily.

There are many deities there who take delight in carrying out good purposes.
If [they] are capable [with respect to] religion, deeds of the pious are carried out.

[125] Chos pa Rin po che

སྔོན་རྒྱལ་དབང་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་དང་། །
རྗེ་གཟིམས་[126]ཁང་གོང་གི་སྤྲུལ་བའི་སྐུ། །
དཔལ་སྟོང་སྐོར་སྤྲུལ་བའི་སྐུ་སོགས་དང་། །
སྒོས་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་དབང་མི་གཟུགས་ཅན། །
མགོན་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དེ། །
དུས་ཡུན་རིང་བཞུགས་ཤིང་བྱིན་བརླབས་[127]པ། །
དེ་ལན་རེ་དྲན་ཡང་དད་པ་གཡོ། །

མགོན་དེ་ཉིད་བཞུགས་པའི་མཚོ་སྔོན་འགྲམ། །
ས་བྱིན་ཆགས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཕུན་ཚོགས་དེ། །
ཡུལ་དེ་ཡི་བཅུད་བསྡུས་གཡང་གི་མཚོ། །
རི་ཉམས་དགའ་ནགས་ཚལ་བཅས་པ་སོགས། །
ཡུལ་དེ་འདྲ་བསྙེན་ན་དགའ་བ་ལ། །

དབྱིངས་སྒྲོས་བྲལ་ཟབ་མོའི་ཉམས་ལེན་དང་། །
ལམ་བྱམས་དང་སྙིང་རྗེ་གོ་གྱོན་ནས། །
དགྲ་ཉོན་མོངས་ཀྱི་དཔུང་དང་འཐབ་ནུས་པའི། །
དཔའ་བོ་ཁྲིམ་ཤོག་[128]ཅིག་ལ་ཡིད་སྨོན་བྱེད། །

ཏ་ཏ་འཇིག་རྟེན་ཆོས་བརྒྱད་འདི་ལ་ལྷག་པ་སྟོན། །
ཨ་ལ་ལ་ཤོམ་ར་དེ་འདྲ་ཞིག་[129]བྱུང་ན་སྐྱིད་པ་ལ། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་ཆུ་ཕོ་སྟག་ལོའི་དགུན་དུས་སུ་བྲིས་པའོ། ། །
།

126 *gzims* ACD; *gzim* B.
127 *brlabs* BCD; *rlabs* A. I have chosen *byin brlabs pa*. Since *byin* is verbalized, I have chosen the pf. stem form to follow it.
128 *shog* CD; *gshog* AB.
129 *zhig* BCD; *cig* A.

Previously the incarnations of the mighty Victorious One, the All-
knowing One,[130] and
Of the lords, incarnations of the Upper Sleeping Quarters,[131]
And the incarnations of Stong skor [Hutughtu][132] and so on, [and],
In particular the mighty Rdo rje ’chang with a human body,
The protector Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho,
Stayed [there] for a long time and although time after time [I]
recollect [his] blessing,
[It still] moves [my] faith.

As for the side of Mtsho sngon, where that very protector dwelt,
That blessed, perfect place,
The prosperous lake which has collected the nectar of the area,
Delightful mountains, together with forests, and so on,
If [one] relies on a place like that, [he] will rejoice.

[I] make offerings to the hero
Who was able to fight with a host of common enemies,
Having donned [the armor] of an experience of the deep sphere that
is free from conceptualization
And an understanding of the path of love and compassion.

Ha ha! Show [your] back to these eight worldly *dharma*s.
A la la! When an extravagance like that arises, [I] am happy!

This also was written by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, in the winter of 1662.

[130] This refers to the Dalai Lama lineage.
[131] This refers to an incarnational line of ’Bras spungs monastery, the counterpart of the Dalai Lama lineage.
[132] Stong skor [= Stong ’khor] Hutughtu/ Sprul sku was an important incarnate at Stong ’khor monastery near the Kokonor.

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གཉུག་མ་འོད་གསལ་གཞིས་ལ། །
བཟང་ངན་སྒྲོས་པ་མེད་དོ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི། །

སྟོང་ཉིད་རིགས་པས་དཔྱད་ན། །
བདག་འཛིན་ཁོ་ཡང་ཧེ་ཧེ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[133]། །

བདེན་འཛིན་སྟོང་པས་བཀག་ན། །
སུ་འཁོར་གང་འཁོར་ཧ་ཧ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[134]། །

འཁོར་མཁན་མེད་ན་ལས་འབྲས[135]། །
རྣམ་གཞག་ཇི་ལྟར་འཇོག་ལགས། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[136]། །

འོན་ཀྱང་སྣང་སྟོང་ངང་ལས། །
ཐ་སྙད་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཞོག་ཡ། །
ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི[137]། །

ཨ་ལི་[138] ཞེས་ན་དགའ་བ། །
སྟོང་ཉིད་ཡིན་ནོ་ཨ་ལི[139]། །

ཨ་ལི་བསྐྱིན་ན་དགའ་བ། །
བླ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ་ཨ་ལི། །

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133 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
134 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
135 *'bras* ABD; *'bral* C.
136 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
137 *a li lo mo a li* CD; *a li* AB.
138 *li* BCD; *yi* A.
139 *li* BCD; *yi* A.

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As for the natural disposition of primordial, clear light,
There is no generation of good and bad.
A li lo mo a li.

If [one] examines emptiness through reasoning,
Clinging to self, itself also—heeee heeee!
A li lo mo a li.

If clinging to truth is refuted through emptiness,
Who goes around? What goes around? Ha ha!
A li lo mo a li.

If there is no agent going around,
How are [we] to put forth an exposition of karma and [its] result?
A li lo mo a li.

Nonetheless, from the state of the luminous void
Transactionally arrange the interdependent origination. Hey you!
A li lo mo a li.

A li. If [you] understand [it],
Happiness is emptiness. A li.

A li. If you rely on him,
Happiness is the lama. A li.

ཨ་ལི་[140] བསྲུང་[141] ན་དགའ་བ། །
སྡོམ་པ་ཡིན་ནོ་ཨ་ལི། །

ཨ་ལི་བསྡུད་ན་དགའ་བ། །
རི་ཁྲོད་ཡིན་ནོ་ཨ་ལི། །

ཨ་ལི་ཀཱ་[142] ལི་སྦྱར་ན། །
སངས་རྒྱས་སྐུར་དུ་འཐོབ་བོ། །

ཨ་ལིའི་དེ་ཉིད་མི་ཤེས། །
འཁོར་བར་སྐུ་ནས་འཁོར་ཡ[143]། །

ཨ་ལི་ཀཱ་ལི་[144] བསླུས་པས། །
ངག་ལ་ནུས་པ་སྐྱེད་ཡ། །

ཨ་ལི་འདི་འདྲའི་གདམས་ངག་
ཤེས་ན་གདམས་[145] པའི་མཆོག་ཡིན། །

ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ་ཨ་ལི། །
ཨ་ཨ་ཨ་ལི་ལོ་མོ། །

ཞེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་གྱིས་སྦྱར་བའོ། ། ། །

[140] *a li* BCD; *ā yi* A.
[141] *bsrung* CD; *gsung* AB.
[142] *kā* BCD; *ka* A.
[143] *ya* CD; *la* AB.
[144] *li* CD; *lī* AB.
[145] *gdams* B; *gdam* ACD.

A li. If you will guard it,
Happiness is the vow. A li.

A li. If you remain in it,
Happiness is the mountain hermitage. A li.

A li. If [you] join the vowels and consonants,
[You] will quickly obtain Buddhahood.

Not knowing the nature of vowels,
[You] will go around samsara on the edge. Hey you!

A li. By having recited the vowels and consonants,
[You] will generate ability for [your] speech. Hey you!

A li. If [you] understand such advice as this,
It is the best of advice.

A li lo mo a li,
A a a li lo mo.

This also was composed by Skal ldan.

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ན་མོ་གུ་རུ། །

འཕགས་པ་ཀླུ་སྒྲུབ་ཉི་ཡབ་སྲས། །
མཉམ་མེད་བློ་བཟང་གི་གྲགས་པ། །
བློ་བཟང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
གསོལ་བ་སྙིང་ནས་རང་འདེབས་སོ། །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྕགས་ཀྱུ་ཡིས་དྲོངས་ཞིག །

རང་སེམས་སྒྲོས་མེད་ཀྱི་རྒོད་པོ། །
ཆོས་དབྱིངས་སུ་འཕུར་སྙིང་འདོད་ཀྱང་། །
བདག་འཛིན་གྱི་རྙི་[146] ཐག་ཁྲ་བོས། །
དབང་མེད་དུ་འཁོར་བར་བཅིངས་སོ། །

ཟབ་ལམ་གྱི་མཚོན་ཆ་རྣོན་པོས། །
བདག་འཛིན་འདི་མྱུར་དུ་གྲོལ་ཅིག །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྕགས་ཀྱུ་ཡིས་དྲོངས་ཞིག །

བློ་བཟང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
རང་སེམས་ཐར་འདོད་ཀྱི་བྱུང་བ། །
ཐར་ལམ་དུ་འཕུར་སྙིང་འདོད་ཀྱང་། །
ཆོས་བརྒྱད་སྣང་རྩེ་ཡི་དགའ་སྟོན། །
སྙེད་བཀུར་དོན་གཉེར་ལ་ཆགས་སོ། །

འདོད་ཡོན་བཙན་དུག་ཏུ་ཞེས་པའི། །
གདམས་ངག་ཟབ་མོ་ཉི་སྐྱོལ་ཅིག །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྕགས་ཀྱུ་ཡིས་ཟུངས་ཞིག །

[146] *rnyi* BD; *snyi* AC.

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[I] prostrate myself before the lama.

Noble Nāgārjuna and disciples,
The unrivalled Blo bzang grags pa, [and]
Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan,[147]
I myself beseech [you] from [my] heart.
Please guide [me] with the iron hook of compassion.

Although the eagle[148] of my nonconceptual mind
Longs to fly to the *dharmadhātu*,
[It] has been helplessly bound all around,
By the multicolored net of egocentricity.

Please quickly cut this egocentricity
With the sharp blade of the deep path.
Please guide [me] with the iron hook of compassion.

Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan,
Although the liberation-wanting bee of [my] own mind
Longs to fly on the path of liberation,
[I] am attached to the feast of honey, the eight [worldly]
*dharma*s, [and]
To seeking the benefits of obtaining wealth and goods and
giving reverence.

Please bestow a deep oral instruction
Through which [I can] apprehend the poison of demons, the quality
of desire.
Please lead [me] with the iron hook of compassion.

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147 The first Paṇ chen lama.

148 I have followed M. Ricard's example in translating *rgod* as eagle rather than vulture, because of the negative connotation of the vulture in the West.

བློ་བཟང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
འགྲོ་དྲུག་ཕ་མ་ཡི་དོན་དུ། །
སངས་རྒྱས་འཐོབ་[149] འདོད་ལ་ཞུགས་ཀྱང་། །
ཉན་ཐོས་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱིས་བཅིངས་སོ། །

གཞན་ཕན་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཡི་ལྷུགས་ཀྱིས། །
ཐེག་ཆེན་ལམ་བཟང་ལ་དྲོངས་ཤིག །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྷུགས་ཀྱུ་ཡིས་ཟུངས་ཤིག །

བློ་བཟང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
མི་རྟག་སྒྱུ་མ་ཡི་ནོར་རྫས། །
ཕྱོགས་མེད་དུ་སྦྱིན་པར་འདོད་ཀྱང་། །
ལན་དང་རྣམ་སྨིན་ལ་རེ་བས། །
ཐེག་དམན་རང་འདོད་ཀྱིས་བཅིངས་སོ། །

འདོད་ཡོན་སྒྱུ་མ་རུ་ཤེས་པའི། །
ཉམས་ལེན་རང་རྒྱུད་ལ་སྐྱོལ་ཅིག །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྷུགས་ཀྱུ་ཡིས་ཟུངས་ཤིག །

བློ་བཟང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཉི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། །
ལུས་སེམས་སོ་སོ་རུ་འབྲལ་བའི། །
མི་རྟག་འཆི་བ་དེ་བྱུང་ཚེ། །
ཆོས་མེད་བྱ་བྲལ་ངའི་[150] མདུན་དུ། །
འཇམ་དབྱངས་བླ་མ་ཁྱོད་བྱོན་ནས། །
རང་སེམས་འོད་ཀྱི་ཉི་ཐིག་ལེ། །
ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྷུགས་ཀྱུ་ནི་རྣོན་པོས། །
ཁྱོད་ཐུགས་བདེ་ཆེན་གྱི་ངང་དུ། །
དབྱེར་མེད་[151] བྱིན་གྱིས་ནི་རློབས་ཤིག །

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149 *’thob* BCD; *thar* A.
150 *nga’i* AB; *ba’i* CD.
151 *med* CD; *med du* AB.

Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan,
Although [I] have embarked upon desiring to obtain Buddhahood
For the benefit of the six [levels of] sentient beings, [my] fathers
and mothers,
[I] have been bound by a Śravaka commitment to enlightenment.

Please lead [me] on the good Mahāyāna path
With the iron hook of compassion [for] the benefit of others.
Please lead [me] with the iron hook of compassion.

Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan,
Although [I] want to impartially give
Wealth and goods, impermanent and illusory,
Because of hopes of retribution and ripening,
[I] have been bound by my own desires for the lower path.

Please bestow practical knowledge on [my] own mental disposition
Which apprehends the illusion of the quality of desire.
Please lead [me] with the iron hook of compassion.

Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan,
When the time of transitory death has come
Which will separate [me] into a distinct body and a distinct mind,
You, lama [who is like] Mañjughoṣa, having arrived
Before me, without religion [and] bereft of action,
Please bless [me] as inseparable from you in the manner of bliss
By breaking into the *thig le* of the light of [my] own mind
[With your] iron hook of compassion.

བསླུ་མེད་སྐྱབས་ཀྱི་ནི་དམ་པ། །
བླ་མ་ཁྱེད་ཉིད་ལས་མེད་དོ། །
འདི་ཕྱི་བར་དོ་ཡི་སྐྱེལ་མ[152]། །
སངས་རྒྱས་ཁྱེད་ཉིད་ལས་མེད་དོ། །

ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྕགས་ཀྱུ་ནི་རྣོན་པོ། །
དད་པའི་མགུལ་ལོང་ལ་ཐོབ་ཅིག །

བླ་མ་ཁྱེད་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་དུ་གྱུར་ཅིག །

ཅེས་པ་འདི་ཡང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་སྦྱར་བའོ། ། ། །

[152] *skyel ma* ABD; *skye lam* C.

Holy lama of infallible refuge,
There is nothing other than yourself.
As escort of this life, later lives, and the *bar do*,
There is no Buddha other than yourself.

Sharp iron hook of compassion,
Please receive and obtain [a song from] a faithful throat.

May [I] become inseparable from you, lama.

This also was composed by Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

APPENDIX B

YAB RJE SKAL LDAN RGYA MTSHO'S LIFE IN BRIEF

Skal ldan rgya mtsho was born in 1607 in Reb gong gser ljongs to his father Rong bo Mkhar 'bum rgyal and mother Nag yu za Snying mo.[1] When he was four or five, he began studying reading and writing with his older half-brother, Chos pa Rin po che, and also was ordained by him at the age of ten.[2] Chos pa Rin po che, who was twenty-six years his senior,[3] would come to influence him in many ways.

In 1617, Chos pa Rin po che continued to emphasize a solid education for his younger brother by taking him to Dbus, in Central Tibet. At Dga' ldan monastery, he entrusted the monks with the formal education of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. Skal ldan rgya mtsho studied in Byang rtse Thos bsam gling, a college of Dga' ldan Monastery founded by Tsong kha pa, for nine years, where he focused on the five books[4] and gained proficiency in scriptures and logic.[5] He also attended the summer session of 1626 at Gsang phu, where he did an examination cycle and concentrated on the *Prajñāpāramitā.*[6]

In Dbus, he received many empowerments, textual transmissions, and tantric rituals from Blo gros rgya mtsho and Tshul khrims chos 'phel, his main teachers at Dga' ldan.[7] He also heard many teachings from many scholars and siddhas, such as Rgyal sras Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho, lamas of Rtse shar, the retired Dga' ldan khri pa and the first Paṇ chen lama.[8] In 1626, in front of the statue of Śākyamuni

[1] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 3.
[2] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 4.
[3] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 3; Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), 1b.3-4.
[4] The term "five books (*po ti lnga*)" refers to the five principal subjects taught in Dge lugs pa monasteries: *Pramāṇa* (*tshad ma*), *Prajñāpāramitā* (*phar phyin*), *Madhyamaka* (*dbu ma*), *Vinaya* (*'dul ba*) and *Abhidharma* (*mngon pa*).
[5] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 6-9.
[6] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 9-10.
[7] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 8, 12.
[8] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 13.

Buddha in the Jo khang, he was fully ordained by the Paṇ chen Lama.[9] With regard to this ceremony, Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote, "[My] whole spiritual continuum was satiated by the nectar of the law."[10]

In 1627 when he was twenty-one, ten years after having left his homeland, he returned to Amdo where he was reunited with Chos pa Rin po che. Soon thereafter, Ko'u ba Chos rgya mtsho, a lama who was to become very important to Skal ldan rgya mtsho, was invited to the nearby hermitage of Bkra shis 'khyil. There, Ko'u ba Chos rgya mtsho gave numerous cycles of instructions and textual transmissions of Mahāyāna texts, such as explanations of the big and small *Byang chub lam rim*[11] and tantric initiations, to the two brothers together with several mountain hermits.[12] This place of solitary retreat was to become the principal home of Skal ldan rgya mtsho later in life.

Another great lama, Sde pa Chos rje Bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho, came to Amdo from Dbus and gave numerous teachings at Sku 'bum.[13] The two brothers went there and elsewhere to study with numerous masters who lived in Amdo or came through, such as the fifth Dalai Lama on his way to China in 1652.[14] About this first phase of his life, Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote that he had requested explanations of the treatises, instruction, initiations, textual transmissions and tantric rituals from thirty-three holy scholars and siddhas.[15]

In the next phase of his life, Skal ldan rgya mtsho aimed at being impartial towards studying and thinking about sutras and tantras.[16] His aim from age twenty-one on was essentially to do tantric practices in solitary places.[17] Chos pa Rin po che, however, discouraged him from this for a while, even though he himself was

9 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 10.
10 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 12.
11 These are the *Lam rim chen mo* (Peking bstan 'gyur, from p. 1, leaf 1, line 136a8) and the *Lam rim chung ba* (Peking bstan 'gyur, from p. 182, leaf 5, line 323a7), both by Tsong kha pa. See *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition: Catalogue & Index* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1962), 853-54.
12 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 13-14.
13 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 14-16.
14 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 16-17, 36.
15 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 18.
16 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 19-20.
17 Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 20.

living that way, and requested that his younger brother found a philosophical college at Rong bo monastery in Reb gong.[18] Skal ldan rgya mtsho founded the school of Thos bsam gling[19] in 1630, when he was twenty-four,[20] and it was financed through patrons and teaching. Eighteen years later in 1648, he founded a seminary for tantric studies at the hermitage Bkra shis 'khyil,[21] whose congregation hall he called "Bka' gdams pho brang." [22] Here instruction in both scriptures and rituals evoking protective deities, initiations, textual transmissions and tantric rituals was given to mountain hermits, and practices such as year-long retreats and month-long retreats were established for them.[23] The number of mountain hermits studying there increased, later reaching as many as two hundred.[24]

In spite of the pressures Skal ldan rgya mtsho felt during the thirty-nine years that he took care of the religious college in Rong bo and the many years that he took care of the seminary for tantric studies at Bkra shis 'khyil,[25] he was also able to spend time meditating in mountain hermitages, and he sang *mgur* melodies in many

[18] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 21-22.
[19] Thos bsam gling was also the name of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's school at Dga' ldan monastery, and after which the school at Rong bo was apparently named.
[20] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 66.
[21] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 66.
[22] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 33.
[23] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 31.
[24] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 31.
[25] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 66. Here is my translation of the account of the founding and development of Bkra shis 'khyil, given in Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 31. Skal ldan rgya mtsho can be identified as the founder, since he was 42 in the year 1648:

> ....in the year 1648 called *kun 'dzin*, having reached the age of 42 [Skal ldan rgya mtsho] founded newly the seminary for Tantric studies (*sgrub sde*) of Bkra shis 'khyil and the mountain hermits also gradually increased, and later there even arose an assemblage of more than two hundred monks who had the three teachings.

For this, see Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 31.

of these places. He practiced in the eight holy places of Reb gong,[26] in many solitary places in the area of the Yellow River such as the mountain Dan tig, Yang tig, and in one hundred caves such as A chung gnam rdzong, Rong bo mar nang gi brag dkar and Gnya' gong brag dkar.[27]

After Chos pa Rin po che's death in 1659 when Skal ldan rgya mtsho was 53, he traveled around Amdo to give teachings in Sku 'bum, Bis mdo, Rdo bis, Shel dgon and so on, and to visit patrons.[28] He attracted disciples from a large area[29] to the south as far as Mdzo dge and to the north as far as Dpa' ris.[30] He became the personal

[26] These are 'Bal gyi mkhar gong la kha, Stag lung shel gyi ri bo, Spyang phu'i lha brag dkar po, 'Dam bu'i brag dkar gser khang, Mtha' smug rdzong dmar dgon pa, Shel del chos kyi pho brang, Skya sgang gnas mo'i bang ba or Do ri dpal gyi ri rtse, Gong mo'i gur khang brag rtsa, and Bcu gcig she. See Ricard, trans., *The Life of Shabkar*, 22, n. 4.

[27] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 20.

[28] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 45, 51.

[29] Maps of Amdo are found in Brag dgon Zhabs drung Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, *Yul mdo smad kyi ljongs su thub bstan rin po che ji ltar dar ba'i tshul gsal bar brjod pa deb ther rgya mtsho* (*A History of the Spread of Buddhism in Amdo*), ed. Yon tan rgya mtsho (Delhi: A lags 'Jam dbyangs and Wa shul Skal bzang Bstan pa, 1974); Turrell V. Wylie, trans., *The Geography of Tibet According to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad,* Serie Orientale Roma 25 (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1962); J. F. Rock, *The Amnye Ma chhen Range and Adjacent Regions: A Monographic Study*, Serie Orientale Roma 12 (Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1956), maps 2 and 3; George N. Roerich, *Le parler de l'Amdo: Étude d'un dialecte archaïque du Tibet,* Serie Orientale Roma 18 (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958); and Ricard, trans., *The Life of Shabkar*, map 2.

[30] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 98. Mdzo dge is south southeast of Rong bo, and appears on a variety of maps of the Amdo region. Using the scale on Rock's map, it looks as if Mdzo dge is about 70 miles south southeast of Rong bo. Dpa' ris seems to be about the same distance north northeast of Rong bo, judging from Wylie's map. That would make the distance over which Skal ldan rgya mtsho had influence about one hundred and forty miles long. This is considerable, considering that transportation in this area was very difficult, mountain passes and deep valleys being the usual terrain.

lama of both the Tümed Mongol governor, Qoloči[31] and another great Mongol governor, the *Ju nang*, who patronized his school.[32]

From 1670 on, for the remaining seven years of his life, he remained principally in Bkra shis ’khyil, where he wrote, spent large portions of his time in retreat, and gave teachings to mountain hermits.[33] By the time of his death in 1677,[34] he had many hundreds of disciples.[35] Many of them, in turn, founded religious colleges and

[31] This Tümed governor, Qoloči (= ’Kho lo che), has the same name as the most important Tümed lord in the history of the tribe in the Kokonor, the great leader of the Tümed, Altan Khan’s grand nephew. According to the biography of the third Dalai Lama, Qoloči was appointed ruler of the Kokonor region in 1579 as a result of his consultation with the Dalai Lama for the purposes of facilitating the movement of Dge lugs pa monks between China and Tibet, and so on. Qoloči led large numbers of his tribe to settle in the Kokonor, where he was the first great leader. He sided with the Dge lugs pa in their war against the Gtsang in Central Tibet and was defeated by the Coγtu in the Kokonor in 1634. See Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, Serie Orientale Roma 40 (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 65, 105 n. 67, 111; and Sum pa Mkhan po Ye shes dpal ’byor, *The Annals of Kokonor*, 29, 32 and 58 n. 13. For more bibliographic information about Qoloči, see Sum pa Mkhan po Ye shes dpal ’byor, *The Annals of Kokonor*, 58 n. 13.

The patron of Skal ldan rgya mtsho was either this same leader, now quite elderly, or someone in his line. Unfortunately, none of the sources I have access to give the year he died.

[32] Tibetan: *ju nang*, Mongol: *ǰinong*, a loanword from Chinese *jun wang*. It originally meant prince of the second rank, but by Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s time the meaning had become blurred and it was just an honorary title that could be given to various people at the same time. H. Serruys states that the title *ǰinong* probably first appeared in the latter part of the sixteenth century. While other authors (Franke, Hambis, and Schmidt) have claimed that *ǰinong* came from the Chinese *qin wang*, prince of the first rank, Serruys gives his reasons for believing that *jun wang* is the correct Chinese title from which the Mongols formed their loanword. Henry Serruys, “J̌inong: chun wang or ch’in wang,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 30 (1976): 199-208. For more references to *ǰinong*, see Sum pa Mkhan po Ye shes dpal ’byor, *The Annals of Kokonor*, 84 n. 160; William Frederick Mayers, *The Chinese Government: A Manual of Chinese Titles*, 3rd ed. (Taipei: Ch’eng-wen Publishing Company, 1966), 3 n. 20; Henry Serruys, *Genealogical Tables of the Descendants of Dayan-Qan* (‘S-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co., 1958), 12 n. 1; and Henry Serruys, *The Tribute System and Diplomatic Missions (1400–1600)*, vol. 2 of *Sino-Mongol Relations during the Ming*, Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques 14 (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1967), 460 n. 52.

[33] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 66.

[34] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 127.

[35] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 31.

seminaries for tantric studies in their own regions.[36] Skal ldan rgya mtsho is widely credited with spreading the Dge lugs pa tradition in Amdo.

[36] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar,* 95-98.

APPENDIX C

CONTENTS OF THE ACCOMPANYING CD OF SKAL LDAN RGYA MTSHO'S SONGS:

Track 1: Dge 'dun 'od zer, of Rong bo dgon Monastery, sings Mgur VII-7 with a large chorus of about 700 male and female villagers from Hor nag Ri gong ma and Ri zhol ma. In this song, Skal ldan rgya mtsho calls himself "the robber of Reb gong," since he is convinced that he has committed "shameless deeds" by profiting monetarily from religion. He concludes that he must go to a mountain hermitage to practice religion and cleanse his inner thoughts.
The words are in Appendix A, pp. 340-41.

(recorded at the solstice festival at Hor nag Ri gong ma, June 26, 2002)

[3'37"]

Track 2: Rin chen byams, lay soloist of Ri gong ma, sings Mgur V-20 with a small chorus of local villagers (six men and five women). This song honors one of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's lamas, who was "more precious than the sun and the stars." He expresses extreme grief over the lama's passing away and a supplication for the lama to watch over him. He laments, "Although I live for the remainder of my life, what will I do?"
The words are on pp. 320-23.

(recorded in Rin chen byams' home in Ri gong ma, July 16, 2002)

[10'29"]

Track 3: Blo bzang, of Rong bo dgon Monastery, sings Mgur X-12 with a large male and female chorus of about a hundred and fifty villagers from Hor nag. I can only offer the first twenty-eight lines here. The song honors the lamas, scholars and practitioners who have blessed Amdo, where "glorious meadows and forests adorn the sublime land."

(recorded at the solstice festival at Hor nag Ri gong ma, June 26, 2001)

[6'07"]

Track 4: Padma dbang can, lay soloist of Bod mo, sings Mgur XIII-8 with a small chorus of five local women. I provide this excerpt of the first eight lines as a means of comparison with the next track, since the melodies are the same. This will show that this form of the melody group *gnyis skol thung bo* is performed essentially the same way in the villages of Bod mo and Ri gong ma.

(recorded in the *ma ni khang* of Bod mo, Sept. 4, 2000)

[2'06"]

Track 5: Rin chen byams sings Mgur VII-10a with a small chorus of ten local villagers. Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho sings about his despair that his behavior has become despicable during his old age in the village, and his decision to go to a solitary retreat to return to the pious behavior of his youth. "Now I'm not staying here. I'm going to a solitary retreat," he sings in a refrain that adds to the swinging nature of the song.

The words are on pp. 342-45.

(recorded in Rin chen byams' home in Ri gong ma, July 16, 2002)

[11'30"]

Track 6: Dge 'dun 'od zer sings Mgur VII-11 with a large chorus of about 700 male and female villagers from Hor nag. This *mgur* is about the great beauties of nature in a retreat of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, and his great joy about living a life of renunciation. It is structurally interesting since eighteen of the last lines end in the same syllables (*...pas bde*, because..., [I] am happy).

The words are on pp. 346-51.

(recorded at the solstice festival at Hor nag Ri gong ma, June 26, 2002)

[7'01"]

Track 7: Padma dbang can sings Mgur XII-15 with a small chorus of five local women. Again I offer a short excerpt sung by the soloist of Bod mo as a means of comparison to the next track, since the melodies are the same.

(recorded in the *ma ni khang* of Bod mo, Sept. 4, 2000)

[1'21"]

Track 8: Sangs rgyas chos ’phel of Rong bo dgon Monastery sings Mgur III-7 with a large male and female chorus of about one hundred and fifty villagers from Hor nag. This is a “fierce supplication” to his guru for support. There is much similarity in the ways Padma dbang can and Sangs rgyas chos ’phel, a very young monk, sing this melody. This indicates that in the early stages of learning how to sing *mgur* in Rong bo dgon, the young monks sing in the same style as the lay soloists do in the villages.

(recorded at the solstice festival at Hor nag Ri gong ma, June 18, 2001)

[5’05”]

Track 9: Sangs rgyas chos ’phel sings Mgur II-2 one year after the previous track was recorded. It is a supplication to the Buddha ’Od dpag med to liberate him with his “great boat of compassion,” sung with a large male and female chorus of about seven hundred villagers from Hor nag. I offer this excerpt of the first eight lines to show how quickly a young monk’s singing can develop, and as a comparison to the way an accomplished soloist of Rong bo dgon sings the same melody in the next track.

(recorded at the solstice festival at Hor nag Ri gong ma, June 25, 2002)

[2’40”]

Track 10: Dge ’dun ’od zer sings Mgur V-8 with a large chorus of about 700 male and female villagers from Hor nag. This *mgur* is about happiness, which comes not by holding on to the state for oneself but by desiring it for all beings. It is structurally interesting since every line begins with the same syllable, *bde*, which forms various compounds and other groupings with the next syllable. The meanings of these combinations often have to do with happiness or bliss. A comparison of tracks 9 and 10 illustrates the accomplished monks’ frequent pattern of singing the first several cycles of a song in the same way as both a soloist from the villages and young monks would. Then the experienced monks speed up by blending fragments of the melody with a chanting style that improvises on some of its cells. Various melodies lend themselves to this form of improvisation, while others can not be sung this way.

The words are on pp. 310-11.

(recorded at the solstice festival at Hor nag Ri gong ma, June 26, 2002)
[2'56"]

Track 11: Dge 'dun 'od zer sings Mgur VII-6 with a large chorus of about 700 male and female villagers from Hor nag. In this *mgur*, Skal ldan rgya mtsho states his lack of integration with the teachings he has received and his desire to go to a "pleasing solitary grove" to practice alone. Tracks 7 and 8 are in the same melody, so a comparison of the three tracks together (sung by a village soloist, a young monk and an experienced monk, respectively) again illustrates the point I made following a comparison of tracks 9 and 10.
The words are on pp. 336-39.
(recorded at the solstice festival at Hor nag Ri gong ma, June 26, 2002)
[4'00"]

Track 12: Rin chen byams sings Mgur X-9 with a small male and female chorus of ten local villagers. Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho supplicates the first Paṇ chen lama to lead him "with the iron hook of compassion," both during Skal ldan rgya mtsho's life and at the point of death.
The words are on pp. 364-69.
(recorded in Rin chen byams' home in Ri gong ma, July 16, 2002)
[19'40"]

APPENDIX D

EXTANT VERSIONS AND CRITICAL EDITION OF THE *MGUR 'BUM*

At least by 1708, some of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *mgur* had already been compiled. This is clear from the fact that his biographer and direct disciple, Ngag dbang bsod nams, makes frequent references to "*mgur 'bum*," and quotes from it in his biography[1] of his teacher. As the following tables show, all of the lines quoted in this biography also occur in extant versions of the *Mgur 'bum*:

Quotes from "*mgur 'bum*" in the biography[2]	*Mgur* in extant versions of the *Mgur 'bum*
p. 23	Mgur IV-1, p. 64[3]
p. 24	Mgur IV-2, p. 68
p. 25	Mgur VI-2, p. 124
p. 27	Mgur VI-1, p. 122
p. 37	Mgur XII-12, p. 309
p. 54	Mgur II-4, p. 26
p. 61	Mgur X-20, p. 242
p. 65	Mgur X-1, p. 209
p. 73	Mgur IX-5, p. 202
p. 91	Mgur III-14, p. 53
p. 94	Mgur X-25, p. 248
pp. 98-99	Mgur XIII-3, p. 333
p. 105	Mgur XII-18, p. 320

The biographer does not specify that the following quotes are from "*mgur 'bum*" but merely refers to them as being from Skal ldan rgya mtsho's "*nyams mgur*" or "*mgur*":

[1] Vostrikov, who had access to a version I do not have, dates the biography to the year 1708 in *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 171 n. 501.
[2] Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*.
[3] The page numbers are in version C.

Quotes from "*nyams mgur*" or "*mgur*" in the biography	*Mgur* in extant versions of the *Mgur 'bum*
p. 55	Mgur XI-6, p. 258
p. 59	Mgur X-11, p. 226
p. 63	Mgur IX-1, p. 197
p. 63	Mgur IX-1, p. 198
p. 65 (with description only)	about Mgur X-10, pp. 224-25
p. 76	Mgur IX-4, p. 201
p. 89	Mgur XI-12, p. 268
p. 102	Mgur III-15, p. 55
pp. 102-3	Mgur XI-18, p. 276-77
p. 103	Mgur X-5, p. 218
pp. 103-4	Mgur X-21, pp. 244-45
p. 104	Mgur XIII-7, p. 341

All of the quotes from "*mgur 'bum*," or of a "*nyams mgur*" or "*mgur*" in the biography appear in the four extant versions of the *Mgur 'bum* listed below. Therefore, it is certain that the two hundred and forty-two *mgur* that came to be printed together in 1756, or at least the core of them, were already recognized as an integral collection at least forty-eight years earlier. At present, there are at least four extant versions in Tibet:[4]

[4] There was also an edition published in India in 1994, made from a copy written out by hand by A khu Khri rgan tshang, the brother of the seventh Skal ldan rgya mtsho, during the former's stay in India sometime after 1958. There are supposed to be copies of Khri rgan tshang's hand-written copy in the libraries in Dharamsala and Varanasi. I have no information on which version of the *Mgur 'bum* Khri rgan tshang's copy was based. The 1994 publication includes an introduction in Tibetan by Rab gsal, a former resident of Reb gong. He provides a concise biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, lists the titles in his *Collected Writings*, and discusses briefly such topics in the *Mgur 'bum* as style, themes and language. See Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Grub dbang skal ldan rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum*, ed. Rab gsal (Varanasi: Rig pa 'byung ba'i grong khyer dpe sgrig sde tshan, 1994). I have not dealt with this version of the *Mgur 'bum* here, since I only became aware of it after finishing my critical edition.

A) *Gsung mgur* (*Collected Songs of Spiritual Experience*), carved at Rong bo monastery, Amdo, in the *me pho byi* year 1756,[5] and copied and published in New Delhi: A lags 'Jam dbyangs, 1977.

B) *Gsung mgur chen mo*, volume Ca of Skal ldan rgya mtsho's *Gsung 'bum*, carved at Rong bo monastery, Reb gong, Amdo in the *me yos* year 1987.[6]

C) *Shar Skal ldan rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum*, Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1994.

D) *Yab rje bla ma Skal ldan rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum*, in *Yab rje bla ma Skal ldan rgya mtsho'i Gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 1-320, Xining: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999.

All four versions contain the same number of *mgur* in the same order, no more and no less. Moreover, the order and number of the lines are the same, with only two exceptions.[7]

The most pronounced difference among the four versions is on the level of words and syllables. I have sought to make a critical edition for all poems used in this book by making the best choice among these versions. Occasionally I have felt it necessary to propose yet another suggestion for a syllable that does not appear in any of the extant editions. My critical edition of all material quoted in this book largely relies on common usages listed in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen*

[5] In 1751 when Khri rgyan 'Jam dbyangs Dge 'dun bstan 'dzin was thirty-five, he is said to have heard the voice of Skal ldan rgya mtsho saying, "If you put my *Mgur 'bum* onto woodblocks, benefit will come to the teaching and sentient beings." He became the editor of the undertaking, which was completed in 1756. From 1778, the woodblocks were administered by the corporation (*bla brang*) of the lineage of Khri rgan. See *Chos kyi rgyal po yab rje skal ldan rgya mtsho'i bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag don ldan rin chen lnga yi do shal*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), folios 8b.6-9a.4.

[6] The next wood carving was done in 1843, and was administered by the corporation of Rong bo Khri chen. In 1935, the seventh incarnation of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, Blo bzang bstan 'dzin 'jigs med 'phrin las collected many donations (25, 549 in paper money) towards another printing, which was finally realized in 1987 in Rong bo. See *Chos kyi rgyal po yab rje skal ldan rgya mtsho'i bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag don ldan rin chen lnga yi do shal*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987), folios 9a.5-10b.3.

[7] In this regard, I have compared versions A, B and C throughout. In the A and B versions of Mgur I-1, one stanza is repeated twice and another stanza once; these repetitions do not occur in C or D. Hence, in A and B, Mgur I-1 has three stanzas (twelve lines) more than in C or D. Mgur XIII-8 has four extra lines in both A and B that are not in C or D.

mo (henceforth referred to as the *TTC*), and when stumped, I consulted the Rong bo monastery scholar, Blo bzang chos grags. Variants of any material quoted here will be indicated in the footnotes, with the texts identified by the abbreviations A, B, C, and D. Besides those choices in my critical edition, I have standardized all sets of *pa*/ *ba*s and *po*/ *bo*s according to customary orthographic rules, without listing the variants in footnotes. I use Wylie transliteration in any romanization of Tibetan script throughout.

APPENDIX E

A CATALOGUE OF SKAL LDAN RGYA MTSHO'S *GSUNG 'BUM (COLLECTED WRITINGS)*

Ka-1

title:

གྲུབ་ཆེན་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་རྣམ་ཐར་
ཡིད་བཞིན་དབང་གི་རྒྱལ་པོ་

subject: biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho

length: 80 folios/ vol. 1, 1-99[1]

colophon:

author: Bo dhi wa kentra bu nye[2]

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[1] I provide the lengths of each text in the woodblock and the page numbers in the bound edition (1999), respectively.

[2] Although the author of this work, a disciple of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, writes a Tibetanized Sanskrit translation of his name in the colophon, he is usually referred to by his Tibetan name, Byang chub Ngag dbang bsod nams (*bo dhi* = *byang chub*, *va gendra* = *ngag dbang*, *puṇ ya* = *bsod nams*). His primary title is Co ne Byang chub mi la, and his personal name is Ngag dbang bsod nams. Brag dgon Zhabs drung Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas refers to him as Byang chub mi la Ngag dbang bsod nams: "....ces Byang chub mi la Ngag dbang bsod nams kyis mdzad pa'i rnam thar bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po las bshad la......" in *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, 307. A. I. Vostrikov also refers to the biographer as Byang chub Ngag dbang bsod nams in *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 171, fn. 501. 'Jigs med theg mchog lists him among the main disciples of Skal ldan rgya mtsho in *Rong bo dgon chen*, 190. The author of this *rnam thar* does not put his name in the text (other than in the colophon), but refers to himself as "I," "*bdag*," various times. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 87-89, 101. As I stated in Appendix D, Vostrikov dates this biography to 1708 in *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 171, fn. 501.

Ka-2[3]

title:

རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་དབང་ཕྱུག་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་རྣམ་
པར་ཐར་པ་
དད་པའི་འདྲེན་བྱེད་

subject: biography of Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (Chos pa Rin po che); these three texts deal with his life in chronological order

length: 20 folios/ vol. 1, 100-33

Ka-2.1 (from 1581 to 1639)

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: based on what Chos pa Rin po che said
time: the 14th day of the third *hor* month of the year *sa mo yos*, 1639
place: the solitary forest Bkra shis 'khyil[4]
scribe: Thos bsam rgya mtsho[5]

[3] Volume Ka of the *Gsung 'bum* includes the six biographies and the history of the spread of Buddhism in Amdo (Ka-7, Ka-5, Ka-4, Ka-6, Ka-3, Ka-2 and Ka-13) that are also found in the aforementioned Skal ldan, *Bla ma'i rnam thar gyi rim pa* (folios 245-55, 256-65, 265-95, 395-396, 396-413, 413-55, and 455-74, respectively).

[4] At least twelve more texts in his *Gsung 'bum* were written at Bkra shis 'khyil (Ka-10, Ka-11, Kha-1, Kha-3.1, Ga-1.1, Ga-1.4, Ga-8, Ga-10.1, Nga-7, Nga-10, Nga-16, and Nga-19).

[5] The monk Thos bsam rgya mtsho was a disciple of Skal ldan rgya mtsho and the scribe of at least six texts in his *Collected Works* (Ka-8.5, Kha-7, Ga-4, Ga-11, Ga-18.4), as well as of at least one of his *mgur* (I-5).

Ka-2.2 (from 1639 to 1659)

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
place: the solitary place Brag seng ge’i rtse
scribe: Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan[6]

Ka-2.3 (1659)

colophon:

subject: Chos pa Rin po che’s testament at the point of death
author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
scribe: Dpal ’byor lhun ’grub

Ka-3

title:

རྗེ་བཙུན་དམ་པ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་[7]
རྗེ་བཙུན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ་[8]

subject: biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s lama, Chos kyi rgya mtsho dpal bzang po, also called Ko’u ba Chos rgya mtsho[9]

length: 20 folios/ vol. 1, 134-48

[6] Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan was the scribe of at least four texts in the *Collected Works* (Ka-4, Nga-15.1, Nga-18). He was a mountain hermit and monk.

[7] Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987): *las*; Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1999): no *las*. The editors thought that it was important to indicate that this work, and most of the subsequent ones, are from his *Collected Writings* (*Gsung ’bum*).

[8] The title of this work in Skal ldan, *Bla ma’i rnam thar gyi rim pa* is *Mkhas grub chen po ko’u ba chos rgya mtsho’i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba’i gtam snyan*.

[9] Ko’u ba Chos rgya mtsho (1571–1635) was one of Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s main teachers in the Amdo region, and gave many teachings at Bkra shis ’khyil and Rong bo monastery. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 13-14, 24, 91.

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: Chos pa Rin po che
place: the mountain hermitage Ri bo dge ’phel

Ka-4

title:

རོང་སྟོན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གྲུབ་དབང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
སེ་ར་རྗེ་བཙུན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་[10] རྣམ་ཐར་ཚིག་ལྷུག་མ་

subject: biography of Se ra Rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1469–1544, who was an erstwhile abbot of Se ra monastery) in prose

length: 14 folios/ vol. 1, 149-71

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: cycles of biographies that Se ra Rje btsun’s spiritual son Bde legs nyi ma (b. 16 c.) gathered together[11]
place: Bsam ’grub bde ldan,[12] in the forest of Mkhar gong[13]
scribe: Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan

Ka-5

title:

རོང་སྟོན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གྲུབ་དབང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
སེ་ར་རྗེ་བཙུན་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་ཚིགས་བཅད་མ་

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[10] Skal ldan, *Bla ma’i rnam thar gyi rim pa*: *gyi*, no *dpal bzang po’i*.

[11] In this catalogue I am only listing the sources that appear in the colophons. Skal ldan rgya mtsho often used more sources than those listed in the colophons, as is apparent from his references to them in many of the texts.

[12] An alternate spelling also used frequently is *bsam grub bde ldan*.

[13] Bsam ’grub bde ldan is a hermitage in the forest of Mkhar gong, within walking distance of Reb gong, in the Dgu chu area of Amdo. Here Skal ldan rgya mtsho wrote at least 9 texts (Ka-4, Ka-5, Ka-6, Ka-7, Ka-9, Ga-12, Ga-18.4, Nga-2, and Nga-15.1).

subject: versified biography of Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po

length: 6 folios/ vol. 1, 172-79

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: biography by Sera Rje btsun’s disciple Bde legs nyi ma, and other well-founded histories
place: the solitary place Bsam ’grub bde ldan

Ka-6

title:

རྗེ་བཙུན་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་བསྟན་འཛིན་བློ་བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་ཞལ་
སྔ་ནས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ་
དད་པའི་སྒོ་འབྱེད་

subject: biography of Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s lama Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho dpal bzang po,[14] frequently called Sde pa Chos [kyi] rje

length: 46 folios/ vol. 1, 180-255

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: Chos pa Rin po che and Bsam gtan rgya mtsho[15]
time: *shing pho spre’u’i lo*, 1644, seven years after that lord had passed away

[14] Skal ldan rgya mtsho also makes references to Blo bzang bstan ’dzin rgya mtsho’s role in the history of the spread of Buddhism in *Rje skal ldan rgya mtsho’i gsung las mdo smad a mdo’i phyogs su bstan pa dar tshul gyi lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, in Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987), Ka-13, folios 3a.4, 4b.3, 5b.6.

[15] According to the *rnam thar* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, Bsam gtan rgya mtsho acted as the *’chad nyan* of the philosophical school of Thos bsam gling at Rong bo monastery for a long time, tamed the area of Reb gong with Spyan ras gzigs’ mantra, and founded the nearby monastery of Dar zhing. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 95

place: the hermitage of Mkhar gong, Bsam ’grub bde ldan
scribe: Nam mkha’ don grub[16]

Ka-7

title:

རོང་སྟོན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གྲུབ་དབང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
འཇམ་དབྱངས་ས་པཎ་ཆེན་པོ་ཀུན་དགའ་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་རྣམ་པར་
ཐར་པ་
མཐོང་ཐོས་དོན་ལྡན་

subject: biography of Sa skya paṇḍita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po

length: 6 folios/ vol. 1, 256-64

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: the great patron of the teaching Ku shrii Bsod nams don grub and Gnyer pa Sangs rgyas rin chen
source: biography of Sa skya paṇḍita, written by Yar klung pa Seng ge rgyal mtshan; *Deb ther sngon po*; and others
place: the solitary grove of Mkhar gong, Bsam ’grub bde ldan
scribe: Nam mkha’ don grub[17]

Ka-8

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བསྟོད་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་རིམ་པ་རྣམས་

[16] Nam mkha’ don grub, the scribe of two biographies by Skal ldan rgya mtsho (Ka-6, Ka-7), was a direct disciple of his. See ’Jigs med theg mchog, *Rong bo dgon chen*, 190.

[17] Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987): *grub*; Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1999): *’grub*. The name of the hermitage can be spelt either way, according to a local scholar Blo bzang chos grags.

subject: cycles of eulogies

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

length of the eleven eulogies together: 10 folios/ vol 1, 265-80

Ka-8.2

colophon:

petitioned by: the patron of the teaching Byams pa rgya mtsho

Ka-8.3

title:

རྗེ་ཀརྨ་པ་སྔ་ཕྱི་རྣམས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པ་

colophon:

subject: petition to former and later Karma pas

Ka-8.4

colophon:

subject: eulogy to Byams pa bzang po, also called Thar pa’i rgyal mtshan

Ka-8.5

colophon:

subject: biography of Ko’u ba Chos kyi rgya mtsho, arranged as a eulogy in verse
scribe: Thos bsam rgya mtsho

Ka-8.6

title:

རྗེ་བཙུན་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ལ་བསྟོད་པ་
བྱིན་རླབས་ཀྱི་བང་མཛོད་

subject: eulogy to Chos pa Rin po che

colophon:

petitioned by: Thos bsam rgya mtsho
scribe: Blo bzang chos grags

Ka-8.7

colophon:

subject: eulogy to Chos pa Rin po che

Ka-8.8

colophon:

subject: petition to Bya khyung Chos rje Rin po che Grags pa bkra shis (b. 1631), together with prayers for his long life

Ka-8.9

colophon:

subject: eulogy to Blo bzang chos grags,[18] together with prayers for his long life

[18] Blo bzang chos grags, a direct disciple of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, also acted as a scribe for Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

Ka-8.11

colophon:

subject: eulogy to Tshul khrims rgya mtsho[19]

Ka-9

title:

རྗེ་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
སྐྱབས་འགྲོའི་འཁྲིད་ཡིག་
བསྟན་པའི་སྒྲོ་འབྱེད་

subject: instruction manual for seeking refuge

length: 3 folios/ vol. 1, 281-84

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: Thos bsam rgya mtsho
sources: instruction for seeking refuge which occurs in *Thugs rje chen pa'i dmar'khrid* (*Introductory Instructions about Avalokiteśvara*) by 'Brong rtse Lha'i btsun pa (b. 14 c.); and the oral teaching of Blo bzang don grub
place: the solitary grove Bsam grub bde ldan

Ka-10

title:

རྗེ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་བཀའ་འབུམ་ལས་
འདུལ་བའི་བསླབ་བྱ་
བསྟན་པའི་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

[19] This Tshul khrims rgya mtsho may have been the lama of Dgon lung monastery, from whom Skal ldan rgya mtsho received the oral teachings and instructions in *Mahāmudrā* and the *Gsam sron me rta 'grel*, instructions about many other deities and instructions in *gcod*. See Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 16.

subject: *Vinaya* precepts

length: 14 folios/ vol. 1, 285-307

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
purpose: to benefit his own disciple-ascetics and renunciant monks
place: Bkra shis 'khyil
scribe: Dpal ldan rgya mtsho

Ka-11

title:

རྗེ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་བསླབ་བྱ་
རྒྱལ་སྲས་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

subject: the bodhisattva precepts

length: 10 folios/ vol. 1, 308-22

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
purpose: to offer at a gathering of his own ascetic disciples
place: Bkra shis 'khyil

Ka-12

title:

ཁྱབ་བདག་མགོན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
སྔགས་ཀྱི་བསླབ་བྱ་
རིག་འཛིན་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

subject: tantric precepts

length: 11 folios/ vol. 1, 323-40

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
purpose: to offer at a gathering of his own renunciant monk disciples as a teaching for memorizing

Ka-13

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
མདོ་སྨད་ཨ་མདོའི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་བསྟན་པ་དར་ཚུལ་གྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་མདོར་བསྡུས་

subject: brief histories of the manner in which the teaching spread in Amdo

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

length of the two texts together: 10 folios/ vol. 1, 341-55

Ka-13.1 (in verse)

Ka-13.2 (in prose)

colophon:

circumstance: wanting to write a history of how the teaching spread in Amdo with more extensive detail later; this is a mere summary

Ka-14

title:

དྲི་ལན་འགའ་ཞིག་

subject: about twenty questions followed by short answers

length: 3 folios/ vol. 1, 356-58

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho's questions with Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan's answers
circumstance: answers to questions sent in a letter
place: Bkra shis lhun po

Kha-1

title:

རྗེ་མཁས་ཞིང་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དབུ་མའི་བསྟན་བཅོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་རྩ་བ་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་ཊཱིཀཱ་
དཔག་བསམ་གྱི་ལྗོན་ཤིང་[20]

subject: commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakakārikā*

length: 145 folios/ vol. 1, 359-474; vol. 2, 1-127

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
scribe: Shes rab bkra shis
place: Bkra shis 'khyil
time: at the age of 70, in the year *me pho 'brug* (1676)

Kha-2

title:

རྗེ་བཙུན་བླ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
མཐའ་བྲལ་དབུ་མའི་ལྟ་འཁྲིད་
ཉེན་འབྲེལ་རིགས་པའི་ཡང་སྙིང་རྡོ་རྗེའི་གཟེགས་མ་

subject: instruction in *Madhyamaka*, free from extremes

length: 5 folios/ vol. 2, 128-33

petitioned by: Chos pa Rin po che

[20] In Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999) this text is in two parts, with *gi stod cha* and *gi smad cha* added to the title above, respectively.

colophon:

author: Chos dbyings rdo rje (= Skal ldan rgya mtsho)[21]
sources: oral instructions in *Madhyamaka* from Bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho, Chos kyi rgya mtsho, Dge 'dun Bstan pa dar rgyas,[22] and others

Kha-3

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དབུ་མའི་ལྟ་ཁྲིད་
དགེ་སློང་ཐོས་བསམ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ལ་བསྐུལ་བ་

length of both together: 3 folios/ vol. 2, 134-36

Kha-3.1

subject: instruction in *Madhyamaka*

circumstance: given to the monk Thos bsam rgya mtsho

[21] Chos dbyings rdo rje is a *gsang mtshan* of Skal ldan rgya mtsho. See *Phyag na padmo yab rje skal ldan rgya mtsho'i skyes ba rabs kyi rgyud gsang gsum snang ba'i sgron me*.

[22] The extent to which Skal ldan rgya mtsho studied with Bstan pa dar rgyas at Dga' ldan monastery is indicated by the following passage in Ngag dbang, *Skal ldan gyi rnam thar*, 8:

> After that, [Skal ldan rgya mtsho] studied with the lama, Dharma lord of Rgyal rong, Mkhas grub bstan pa dar rgyas, and for seven years [he] was made to study regarding the five great books, both the *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma*, both the *Madhyamaka* and *Prajñāpāramitā*, together with the *Pramāṇavārttika*, together with the abridgement of those texts such as the abridgement of *Madhyamaka* and such texts as the *rten' brel*, *bsam gzugs*, *dge 'dun nyi shu*, *drang nges rnam 'byed*, and the abridgement of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

The latter five texts are by Tsong kha pa. For these works see numbers 6016, 6148, 6147, 6142 and 6150? in *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition: Catalogue & Index*, on pp. 856, 868, 866 and 869, respectively.

colophon:

author: Skal ldan ras pa
petitioned by: Thos bsam rgya mtsho[23]
place: the mountain hermitage Bkra shis ’khyil

Kha-3.2

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ལྟ་བའི་དམིགས་ཁྲིད་མདོར་བསྡུས་

subject: a summary of the instructions upon which one should focus one’s mind which involve the doctrine

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
purpose: to benefit himself and others

Kha-4

title:

མཁས་ཤིང་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་རྗེ་བླ་མ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བསྟན་བཅོས་མངོན་པར་རྟོགས་པའི་རྒྱན་གྱི་སྐབས་དང་པོ་ནས་སྐབས་བཞི་བའི་ཐེག་
ཆེན་གྱི་ཐར་པ་ཆ་མཐུན་འཆད་པའི་བར་གྱི་ཚིག་དོན་རྣམ་པར་བཤད་པ་

subject: commentary on chapters one through four of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*

length: 45 folios/ vol. 2, 137-210

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

[23] As previously noted, the monk Thos bsam rgya mtsho was a disciple of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, and acted as a scribe for a number of texts in the *Gsung ’bum*. He also petitioned several texts.

Kha-5

title:

ཕྱག་ཆེན་བརྒྱུད་འདེབས་

subject: petition to the *Mahāmudrā* lineage

length: 3 folios/ vol. 2, 211-213

colophon:

source: spoken by Chos pa Rin po che

Kha-6

title:

འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དགེ་ལྡན་ཕྱག་ཆེན་ཟབ་ཁྲིད་གདམས་ངག་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ནས་བཏུས་པ་

subject: quotations from *Dge ldan phyag chen zab khrid gdams ngag rgya mtsho*

length: 14 folios/ vol. 2, 214-35

colophon:

source: Skal ldan rgya mtsho quotes from the *Gdams ngag rgya mtsho*
purpose: to give to the assemblage of monks
circumstance: Tshul khrims bkra shis[24] memorized it and wrote it down, and [Skal ldan rgya mtsho] edited it again

[24] Tshul khrims bkra shis is listed among Skal ldan rgya mtsho's disciples. See 'Jigs med theg mchog, *Rong bo dgon chen*, 190.

Kha-7

title:

རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དགེ་ལྡན་བཀའ་བརྒྱུད་ཕྱག་ཆེན་པའི་ཉམས་ཁྲིད་
རྗེ་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་གིས་བསྐུལ་བ་

subject: experiential manual for the Dga' ldan oral tradition of *Mahāmudrā*

petitioned by: Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po

length: 12 folios/ vol. 2, 236-53

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
scribe: Thos bsam rgya mtsho
circumstance: offered to his teacher Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po

Kha-8

title:

ཕྱག་ཆེན་གྱི་འཁྲིད་ཡིག

subject: instruction manual for *Mahāmudrā*[25]

length: 9 folios/ vol. 2, 254-65

Ga-1

title:

འཇམ་དཔལ་དབྱངས་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བླ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་སྐོར་འགའ་ཞིག་

[25] Though there is no indication in the title, this work seems to be by Skal ldan rgya mtsho, according to the Rong bo scholar, Blo bzang chos grags.

subject: several cycles of guru yoga

length: 6 folios/ vol. 2, 266-73

Ga-1.1

topic:

རྗེ་བཙུན་འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་བླ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་བསྒོམ་པར་འདོད་པས་

subject: guru yoga of Mañjuśrī

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: the mountain hermit Ngag dbang bstan ’dzin
place: Bkra shis ’khyil

Ga-1.2

title:

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་སེམས་ཉིད་ངལ་བ་སའི་[26] བླ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་

subject: guru yoga of Thugs rje chen po sems nyid ngal ba so[27]

colophon:

source: oral teaching by Blo bzang bstan ’dzin
circumstance: given by him to an assemblage of monks and lay at Rong bo monastery; written down by Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Ga-1.3

title:

རྗེ་མི་ལ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་བླ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་

subject: guru yoga for Mi la ras pa

[26] Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987): *ba so’i*; Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1999): *bso’i*.
[27] Avalokiteśvara Karṣapanī

colophon:

source: oral teaching by Blo bzang bstan 'dzin
circumstance: given by him to several of us mountain hermits at the place of shaving hair; written down later by Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Ga-1.4

title:

རྗེ་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་བློ་བཟང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་སྐྱབས་གསུམ་ཀུན་འདུས་སུ་
སྒོམ་ཚུལ་

subject: how to meditate on Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (Chos pa Rin po che)

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: the monk Bsod rnams rin chen
place: Bkra shis 'khyil

Ga-2

title:

རྗེ་མཁས་གྲུབ་སྨྲ་བའི་དབང་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་འབུམ་ལས་
བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་འཁྲིད་
སློབ་མ་རི་ཁྲོད་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཉམས་འཁྲིད་དུ་སྩལ་བ་[28]

subject: experiential manual for instructions in Tsong kha pa's *The Gradual Path to Enlightenment*

circumstance: given to disciple mountain hermits

length: 15 folios/ vol. 2, 274-96

[28] Instead, I am reading *bstsal ba* here.

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Ga-3

title:

ངག་གི་དབང་ཕྱུག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་རིམ་གྱི་འཁྲིད་
རྗེ་གྲགས་པ་རྒྱལ་མཚན་སོགས་ལ་བསྩལ་བ་

subject: instruction in Tsong kha pa’s *The Gradual Path to Enlightenment*

circumstance: given to Rje Grags pa rgyal mtshan[29] and others

length: 13 folios/ vol. 2, 297-315

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Ga-4

title:

མཁས་གྲུབ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་འཁྲིད་
ཆོས་རྗེ་ཀུན་དགའ་ལེགས་པ་ལ་བསྩལ་བ་

subject: instruction in Tsong kha pa’s *The Gradual Path to Enlightenment*

circumstance: given to Kun dga’ legs pa and others

length: 9 folios/ vol. 2, 316-27

[29] This Grags pa rgyal mtshan is probably the one referred to in the colophon to Ga-18, pt. 4 as a great patron of the teaching who created an endowment for Buddhist texts.

colophon:

petitioned by: Kun dga’ legs pa
place: a solitary house on the mountain peak of Sgyed gsum mthon po
scribe: the monk Thos bsam rgya mtsho

Ga-5

title:

རྗེ་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་དམར་འཁྲིད་
བློ་གསལ་པདྨོའི་ཁ་འབྱེད་

subject: introductory instructions in the gradual path to enlightenment

length: 13 folios/ vol. 2, 328-47

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: given to the mountain hermits of the eastern solitary place Thar pa gling

Ga-6

title:

ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
རི་ཁྲོད་པ་འགའ་ལ་
ལམ་འཁྲིད་ཟིན་ཐུན་དུ་ཕོག་པ་

subject: a rough draft of instructions in the path [and stages]

length: 9 folios/ vol. 2, 348-60

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: an instruction manual given to several of his own renunciant disciples

Ga-7

title:

རྗེ་བཙུན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་དམིགས་ཁྲིད་ཟབ་མོ་

subject: a deep instruction for focusing one’s thoughts on the gradual path to enlightenment

length: 15 folios/ vol. 2, 361-82

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho[30]

Ga-8

title:

བཀའ་འདྲིན་མཉམ་མེད་རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་འཁྲིད་
སྐྱོང་བདེ་བ་

subject: instruction in the gradual path to enlightenment

length: 17 folios/ vol. 2, 383-408

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: given as an experiential manual to those who live in renunciant mountain hermitages
place: Bkra shis ’khyil

[30] The author is identified as Skal ldan rgya mtsho in the title.

Ga-9

title:

མཁན་ཆེན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
རྒྱུན་དུ་ཉེར་མཁོའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ཟབ་མོ་

subject: deep meditation which is continually required

length: 7 folios/ vol. 2, 409-417

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: for the benefit of mountain hermits

Ga-10

length of both texts together: 24 folios/ vol. 2, 418-55

Ga-10.1

title:

རྗེ་མཚུངས་མེད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་བློ་སྦྱོང་དོན་བདུན་མའི་ཉམས་འཁྲིད་
ཐེག་ཆེན་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

subject: an experiential manual for *Blo sbyong don bdun ma* (*Seven Points for Training the Mind*)[31]

length: 35 pages

[31] For an English translation of the *Blo sbyong don bdun ma*, see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Universal Compassion: A Commentary to Bodhisattva Chekhawa's Training the Mind in Seven Points* (London: Tharpa Publications, 1988).

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: given as an experiential manual to many of his own disciples, monks who apply themselves single-mindedly to cycles of practice and contemplation in the year-long retreat
place: Bkra shis ’khyil

Ga-10.2

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
རྗེ་བ་སོ་བའི་གསུང་རྒྱུན་བཀོད་པ་

subject: an arrangement of the tradition of Rje Ba so ba

length: 2 pages

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: oral teachings of the Ba so incarnate Ngag dbang chos kyi dbang phyug

Ga-11

title:

གྲུབ་ཆེན་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་བློ་སྦྱོང་
ཡིད་ཀྱི་མུན་སེལ་

subject: *Blo sbyong* (spiritual purification)

length: 41 folios/ vol. 3, 1-64

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: Chos pa Rin po che

sources: *Blo sbyong* by Hor ston pa; *Byang sdom gyi rnam bshad* by ’Brong rtse Lha btsun pa; *Byang chub lam rim*; *Blo sbyong gi rtsa tshig* by Hor ston pa
scribe: Thos bsam rgya mtsho

Ga-12

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཐུན་དྲུག་གི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་ཚུལ་གྱི་རིམ་པ་གཉིས་

subject: how to practice meditation for six watches

author of both: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

length of both: 3 folios/ vol. 3, 65-68

Ga-12.1

colophon:

source: *Rtsa ltung rnam bshad dam*[32] *tshig gsal ba’i sgron me*, by Mkhas grub Nor bzang rgya mtsho (1423–1513)
purpose: to benefit himself
place: the solitary place Bsam grub bde ldan

Ga-12.2

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཐུན་དྲུག་བསྡུས་པ་

[32] Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987): *dam*; Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1999): no *dam*.

Ga-13

title:

སྐྱབས་གནས་ཀུན་འདུས་ཀྱི་བདག་ཉིད་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དམ་པ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་
གསུང་ལས་
སེམས་གནས་ཀྱི་འཁྲིད་གཉིས་

subject: instructions in stabilizing the mind

author of both: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

length of both together: 6 folios/ vol. 3, 69-76

Ga-13.1

colophon:

circumstance: given to the provost of Sku ’bum, Blo bzang rgya mtsho

Ga-13.2

title:

མཁས་ཤིང་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
སེམས་འཁྲིད་

Ga-14

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཞི་གནས་ཀྱི་དམིགས་འཁྲིད་

subject: an instruction for focusing one’s mind on *zhi gnas* (*śammatha*)

length: 3 folios/ vol. 3, 77-80

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
sources: *Phyag rgya chen po'i 'khrid*, by the first Paṇ chen Lama and instruction manuals by Gsang mda' ba[33] Chos ldan rab 'byor and others

Ga-15

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་འབུམ་ལས་
རིན་ཆེན་ཕྲེང་བའི་སྨོན་ལམ་གྱི་ཊཱི་ཀཱ་

subject: a commentary on *Rin chen phreng ba'i smon lam*[34]

length: 5 folios/ vol. 3, 81-87

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: Rgyal tshab chos rje's commentary

Ga-16

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
རྒྱུད་སྡེ་སྤྱིའི་རྣམ་གཞག་ཉུང་བསྡུས་

subject: a brief summary of the general analysis of tantric literature

length: 5 folios/ vol. 3, 88-94

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho[35]

[33] Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987): *ba*; Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999): no *ba*.
[34] *Rājaparikathāratnāvalī*, by Nāgārjuna. See Michael Hahn, *Nagarjuna's Ratnavali*, Indica et Tibetica, ISSN 0723-3337, Bd. 1, 19 (Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1982-90).
[35] The author is identified by the title as Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

Ga-17

title:

མཁས་ཤིང་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་མཛད་པའི་
བསྡུས་གྲྭའི་རྩ་ཚིག་

subject: eristic

length: 5 folios/ vol. 3, 95-101

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho spoke this

Ga-18

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དྲི་ལན་སོགས་ཐོར་བུ་རྣམས་ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་ཏུ་བསྒྲིགས་པ་

subject: miscellaneous questions and answers

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s answers to questions posed by others

length: 7 folios/ vol. 3, 102-111

Ga-18.1

colophon:

subject: answer to a question posed by a spiritual friend endowed with supreme wisdom

Ga-18.2

colophon:

subject: answer to a question posed by Thos bsam rgya mtsho

Ga-18.3

colophon:

subject: how the precious physical relics of Mi la ras pa’s remained in the cave of Zho phug rdo rje

Ga-18.4

colophon:

subject: catalogue of tantric texts, Phan bde’i gzhi ’dzin
circumstance: written when the patron of the teaching, the gnyer ba named Grags pa rgyal mtshan, brought into existence through endowment all volumes of the texts in Tibet
place: the solitary place Bsam grub bde ldan
scribe: Thos bsam rgya mtsho

Ga-18.5

colophon:

subject: advice to Skal ldan rgya mtsho’s spiritual friend Ngag dbang rnam rgyal

Ga-18.6

colophon:

subject: advice to those of the solitary place of Dga’ ldan skyed tshal

Nga-1

title:

ཁྱབ་བདག་རྡོ་རྗེ་སེམས་དཔའི་ངོ་བོ་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དམ་པ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་
གསུང་ལས་
བདེ་མཆོག་ལྷ་ལྔའི་སྒྲུབ་ཐབས་ཚིགས་བཅད་དུ་བསྡེབས་པ་

subject: *sādhana* of Bde mchog lha lnga, in verse

length: 13 folios/ vol. 3, 112-30

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
place: the dwelling place of ’Khor lo bde mchog, Gnya’ gong brag dkar

Nga-2

title:

དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་བདེ་མཆོག་གི་ཕྱི་རོལ་མཆོད་པ་ལག་མཆོད་བཅས་པ་དང་ཚོགས་
ཀྱི་མཆོད་པ་
འདོད་ཡོན་རྒྱན་དུ་རོལ་བ་

subject: the outer offering together with the hand offering to ’Khor lo bde mchog

length: 3 folios/ vol. 3, 131-34

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
place: Bsam grub bde ldan

Nga-3

title:

རྡོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་ཞལ་སྔ་ནས་ཀྱི་གསུང་
ལས་
དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་བདེ་མཆོག་དྲིལ་བུ་ཕྱི་དཀྱིལ་ལྷ་ལྔའི་བདག་འཇུག་
དངོས་གྲུབ་ཆར་འབེབས་

subject: self-empowerment of ’Khor lo bde mchog dril bu phyi dkyil lha lnga

length: 16 folios/ vol. 3, 135-61

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho[36]

colophon:

source: Dkyil chog bde chen rol mtsho, by Lūipa;[37] the oral instructions of his own root lama

Nga-4

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་བདེ་མཆོག་ལྷ་ལྔའི་བདག་མདུན་ཐ་མི་དད་དུ་སྒྲུབ་ཚུལ་དང་བདག་
འཇུག་
དངོས་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་རོལ་མཚོ་

subject: how to carry out the *bdag mdun* and *bdag ’jug* of ’Khor lo bde mchog lha lnga

length: 16 folios/ vol. 3, 162-87

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: *Bde mchog dril bu lha lnga’i bdag ’jug dngos grub kyi rol mtsho* by Bsod nams rgya mtsho
circumstance: written as an abridgement to benefit himself

Nga-5

title:

རིགས་ཀུན་ཁྱབ་བདག་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་ཆེན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
བདེ་མཆོག་ལཱུ་ཨི་པའི་རྫོགས་རིམ་གྱི་དམར་འཁྲིད་
གྲུབ་ཐོབ་ཀྱི་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

[36] The author is identified in the title as Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

[37] For Lūipa’s story and a discussion of some historical sources on him, see Keith Dowman, ed., trans., *Masters of Mahāmudrā: Songs and Histories of the Eighty-Four Buddhist Siddhas* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 33-38.

subject: introductory instruction in Lūipa's perfection stage

length: 8 folios/ vol. 3, 188-99

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: given as an experiential manual to several spiritual friend renunciants, such as Grags pa dar rgyas of Dgon lung monastery

Nga-6

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་བདེ་མཆོག་དྲིལ་བུ་ལྷ་ལྔའི་རྫོགས་རིམ་གྱི་ཉམས་འཁྲིད་

subject: experiential manual for the perfection stage of 'Khor lo bde mchog dril bu lha lnga

length: 6 folios/ vol. 3, 200-208

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
purpose: to benefit his own disciple mountain hermits
place: the monastery of Lcang shar, Bshad sgrub dar rgyas in Rdo bis

Nga-7

title:

དོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ནཱ་རོའི་ཆོས་དྲུག་གི་འཁྲིད་
གྲུབ་པའི་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

subject: instructions in *Nā ro'i chos drug*

length: 10 folios/ vol. 3, 209-24

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: given as a text of what is to be applied to five of his own disciples
place: Bkra shis ’khyil
scribe: Grags pa dar rgyas[38]

Nga-8

title:

ཁྱབ་བདག་མགོན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དཔལ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཇིགས་བྱེད་ཆེན་པོའི་རྫོགས་རིམ་གྱི་འཁྲིད་
སྐལ་ལྡན་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

subject: instructions in the completion stage of Rdo rje ’jigs byed

length of three texts: 6 folios/ vol. 3, 225-40

Nga-8.2

title:

གཏུམ་མོ་ཨ་ཐུང་ཤད་ཀྱི་མན་ངག་གི་སྒོ་ནས་འཇིགས་བྱེད་རྫོགས་རིམ་བསྒོམ་ཚུལ་

subject: meditation on the completion stage of ’Jigs byed in the manner of the deep method of the *a thung shad* for *gtum mo*.

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
sources: oral instructions of Rje yab sras (Tsong kha pa and his two main students) and other counsel of many scholars and practitioners
circumstance: given as an experiential manual to renunciants who explain and meditate

[38] It seems likely that Grags pa dar rgyas is also the one by the same name who received a text from Skal ldan rgya mtsho, Nga-5.

Nga-8.3

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
རྡོ་རྗེའི་མགུར་

subject: *Vajra* songs

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Nga-9

topic:

དཔལ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཇིགས་བྱེད་དཔའ་བོ་གཅིག་པའི་སྨོན་ལམ་དང་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དང་བཅས་པ་

subject: prayer and good wishes at the end of the practice of Rdo rje ’jigs byed dpa’ bo gcig pa

length: 2 folios/ vol. 3, 241-43

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: the monk Blo bzang dam chos and others
source: Chos kyi rgya mtsho

Nga-10

title:

རྗེ་རཏྣ་བྷཱ་གྱ་ས་མུ་དྲ་ཤྲཱི་བྷ་དྲའི་[39] བཀའ་འབུམ་ལས་
དཔལ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཇིགས་བྱེད་ཀྱི་རྫོགས་རིམ་
སྙན་བརྒྱུད་རིམ་གཉིས་བདུད་རྩིའི་སྙིང་པོ་

subject: completion stage of Rdo rje ’jigs byed

length: 13 folios/ vol. 3, vol. 244-63

[39] This is Tibetanized Sanskrit for Rin chen Skal ldan rgya mtsho dpal bzang po.

colophon:

circumstance: given by Skal ldan rgya mtsho to Grags pa rgyal mtshan[40]
place: Bkra shis ’khyil

Nga-11

title:

ཁྱབ་བདག་རྡོ་རྗེ་སེམས་དཔའི་ངོ་བོ་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་དམ་པ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་
དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དཔལ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཇིགས་བྱེད་ཀྱི་རྫོགས་རིམ་
སྙན་བརྒྱུད་བདུད་རྩིའི་བུམ་པ་

subject: completion stage of Rdo rje ’jigs byed

length: 7 folios/ vol. 3, 264-73

colophon:

circumstance: Skal ldan rgya mtsho gave this text as an experiential manual to renunciants

Nga-12

title:

བླ་མ་དུས་གསུམ་མཁྱེན་པ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཡི་དམ་སྒྲུབ་སྐོར་འགའ་ཞིག་

subject: several cycles of practices regarding tutelary deities

length of three texts: 5 folios/ vol. 3, 274-78

[40] Since Grags pa rgyal mtshan is referred to here as *mkhas pa’i dbang bo bstan ’dzin dam pa*, he seems to be the patron, rather than the disciple of the same name, referred to in ’Jigs med theg mchog, *Rong bo dgon chen*, 190.

Nga-12.1

topic:

དཔལ་རྟ་མགྲིན་ལྕགས་རལ་ཅན་བསྒྲུབ་པ་འདོད་པས།.......

subject: the practice of Rta mgrin lcags ral can

colophon:

author: Chos dbyings rdo rje (= Skal ldan rgya mtsho)

Nga-12.2

topic:

འཇམ་དབྱངས་སྨྲ་བའི་སེང་གེ་བསྒྲུབ་པར་འདོད་པས། ....

subject: the practice of ’Jam dbyangs smra ba’i seng ge

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: instructions of holy superior ones

Nga-12.3

topic:

དོན་ཡོད་རྡོ་རྗེའི་སྒོམ་བཟླས་བྱེད་པའི་ཚུལ་.......

subject: meditation and recitation of Don yod rdo rje

colophon:

source: oral teachings of Rje yab sras (Tsong kha pa and his two main disciples) put into verse by Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Nga-13

title:

ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྗེ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་རྒྱལ་བ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་གསང་སྒྲུབ་ལྷ་དགུ་མའི་སྒྲུབ་ཐབས་

length of both texts: 10 folios/ vol. 3, 279-93

Nga-13.1

subject: ritual text of Thugs rje chen po rgyal ba rgya mtsho gsang sgrub lha dgu ma

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
sources: *Thugs rje chen po rgyal ba rgya mtsho* by Bstan ’dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho; *Gsang sgrub bcu gsum ma* by Sde pa Chos kyi rje

Nga-13.2

topic:

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་གསང་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་མདུན་སྐྱེད་སྒྲུབ་ཚུལ་.........

subject: the secret practice in which Avalokiteśvara (Thugs rje chen po) is produced in front of you

Nga-14

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་གསང་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་བསྐྱེད་རིམ་

subject: perfection stage of Avalokiteśvara

length: 4 folios/ vol. 3, 294-99

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
sources: many tantric texts such as *Sngags rim*,[41] in accordance with the thought of Bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho
petitioned by: Nam mkha' don 'grub[42]
scribe: Bsam gtan rgya mtsho[43]

Nga-15

title:

གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་ཆེན་པོ་རྗེ་བཙུན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོའི་དམར་འཁྲིད་ཀྱི་དམིགས་པའི་སྐོར་

subject: introductory instructions in the practice of Avalokiteśvara

length of three texts: 12 folios/ vol. 3, 300-18

Nga-15.1

colophon:

source: *Blo gros kyi thugs rje chen po'i dmar 'khrid kyi dmigs skor rnam*s, by 'Brong rtse Lha'i btsun pa Rin chen rgya mtsho, arranged in one place by Skal ldan rgya mtsho
place: Bsam grub bde ldan in the woods of Mkhar gong
scribe: Kun dga' rgyal mtshan

Nga-15.2

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ལྟ་བའི་འཁྲིད་ལས་དང་པོ་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཤིན་དུ་མགོ་བ་

[41] This is the *Sngags rim chen mo*, by Tsong kha pa.
[42] Nam mkha' don 'grub, a direct disciple of Skal ldan rgya mtsho, was also a scribe of several texts in the *Gsung 'bum*. See 'Jigs med theg mchog, *Rong bo dgon chen*, 190.
[43] Bsam gtan rgya mtsho also petitioned a work by Skal ldan rgya mtsho (Ka-6).

subject: instructions in the doctrine

Nga-15.3

topic:

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་དམར་འཁྲིད་ཀྱི་བླ་བརྒྱུད་ནི།.....

subject: transmission of introductory instructions about Avalokiteśvara

Nga-16

title:

མཁས་གྲུབ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
མགོན་པོ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞལ་གདམས་སྙིང་པོ་དོན་གསུམ་གྱི་ཉམས་འཁྲིད་
དགའ་ལྡན་དུ་བགྲོད་པའི་བདེ་ལམ་

subject: experiential manual for the three core topics concerning Avalokiteśvara

length: 11 folios/ vol. 3, 319-34

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
circumstance: given to more than eighty of his own renunciant disciples for memorizing through repetition
place: the solitary place Bkra shis ’khyil
scribe: the monk Bde ba’i ’byung gnas

Nga-17

title:

ཐུགས་རྗེའི་མངའ་བདག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
སྙིང་པོ་དོན་གསུམ་གྱི་ཁྲིད་སྨིན་སླས་[44]པ་རྣམས་ལ་སྤུལ་བ་

[44] Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1999): *slas*; Skal ldan, *Gsung ’bum* (1987): *lhas*. My decision between the two is tenuous.

subject: instruction manual for the three core topics concerning Avalokiteśvara

length: 6 folios/ vol. 3, 335-42

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho[45]

Nga-18

title:

མཁས་གྲུབ་ཟླ་བའི་དབང་པོ་རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་འབུམ་ལས་
སྒྲོལ་མའི་ཏཱི་ཀྐ་

subject: commentary on Sgrol ma

length: 7 folios/ vol. 3, 343-52

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
sources: *Sgrol ma'i ti kka*, by Dge 'dun rgya mtsho, ornamented with other good explanations
place: the monastery of Lcang shar, Bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling
scribe: the monk and mountain hermit Kun dga' rgyal mtshan

Nga-19

title:

ཁྱབ་བདག་མགོན་པོ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དྲན་པ་བཞི་ལྡན་གྱི་སྒོ་ནས་ཁྲིད་ཟབ་མོ་རྒྱུན་དུ་སྐྱོང་བའི་ཚུལ་
ཐར་འདོད་མཛེས་རྒྱན་

subject: instructions in the four kinds of mindfulness

length: 12 folios/ vol. 3, 353-72

[45] The author is identified in the title as Skal ldan rgya mtsho.

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: Byang chub lam gyi rim pa, and the kindness of Bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho, Chos rgya mtsho, Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan
circumstance: given as an introductory instruction to many of his own disciple renunciant monks who remained during the year long meditation retreat
place: Bkra shis 'khyil

Nga-20

title:

བཀླག་ཐབས་
འདོད་འཛོམ་

subject: reciting mantras

length: 5 folios/ vol. 3, 373-79

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: his own disciple Grags pa rgyal mtshan
sources: *Sngags klog pa*, by Snar thang *lo tsā ba*; the writings of 'Jam dbyangs rig ral, Ne'u pan di ta, and Chos rje Bsod nams rnam[46] rgyal; the eloquent explanations of Tsong kha pa

Nga-21

title:

མཁས་གྲུབ་སྨྲ་བའི་ཉི་མ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
གཏོར་མ་བརྒྱ་རྩའི་རིམ་པ་

[46] Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1987): *rnam*; Skal ldan, *Gsung 'bum* (1999): *rnal*.

subject: *gtor ma*

length of three texts: 10 folios/ vol. 3, 380-94

Nga-21.1

colophon:

source: *Gtor ma brgya rtsa*, by Paṇ chen thams cad mkhyen pa Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, arranged for chanting by Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Nga-21.2

title:

བརྒྱ་རྩ་བསྔོས་པ་

Nga-21.3

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས
སྦྲུལ་གཏོར་དཀོར་སྒྲིབ་དག་བྱེད་ཟླ་ཤེལ་ཆུ་རྒྱུན་

subject: how to send a *gtor ma* at an evil spirit

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
petitioned by: mountain hermit monks
source: *Brul gtor gyi cho ga* by Paṇ chen thams cad mkhyen pa Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan

Nga-22

title:

རྗེ་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
ཟབ་དོན་གཅོད་ཀྱི་གདམས་པ་ཟབ་མོ་

subject: instruction in *gcod*

length: 28 folios/ vol. 3, 395-439

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Nga-23

topic:

གཅོད་བསྡུས་

subject: *gcod yul*

length: 1 folio/ vol. 3, 439-40

colophon:

circumstance: given to the spiritual friend Blo bzang dar rgyas by Skal ldan rgya mtsho

Nga-24

title:

རྗེ་སྐལ་ལྡན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གསུང་ལས་
དཀར་ཕྱོགས་སྐྱོང་བའི་ཡུལ་ལྷ་གཉན་ཆེན་པོ་སེ་ཀུ་བྱ་ཁྱུང་ལ་བསང་མཆོད་འབུལ་
ཚུལ་

subject: how to give an offering of *bsang* to the local deity Gnyan chen po Se ku bya khyung

length: 2 folios/ vol. 3, 441-43

colophon:

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
source: the claims of the Master (*Dpon po*) Bsod nams rgya mtsho
place: the mountain peak of Lha zhol brag dkar of Gnyan chen po

Ca[47]

length: 177 folios/ vol. 4, 1-320

colophon:

title: གསུང་མགུར་ཆེན་མོ་

author: Skal ldan rgya mtsho
subject: a collection of *mgur* by Skal ldan rgya mtsho

[47] I have not inserted the chapter headings in the two bound editions, because the headings do not appear in the woodblock editions. They are new and do not explain the general topics of their respective chapters.

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Villagers of Hor nag Ri gong ma, Hor nag Ri zhol ma and Bod mo sing the choruses.

These songs were recorded on the Tibetan plateau in the villages of Hor nag Ri gong ma and Bod mo, Qinghai, P.R.C., in the summers of 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Notes for the songs are in Appendix C, with references to the Tibetan texts and translations in Appendix A.

Compiled, recorded, translated and annotated by Victoria Sujata
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